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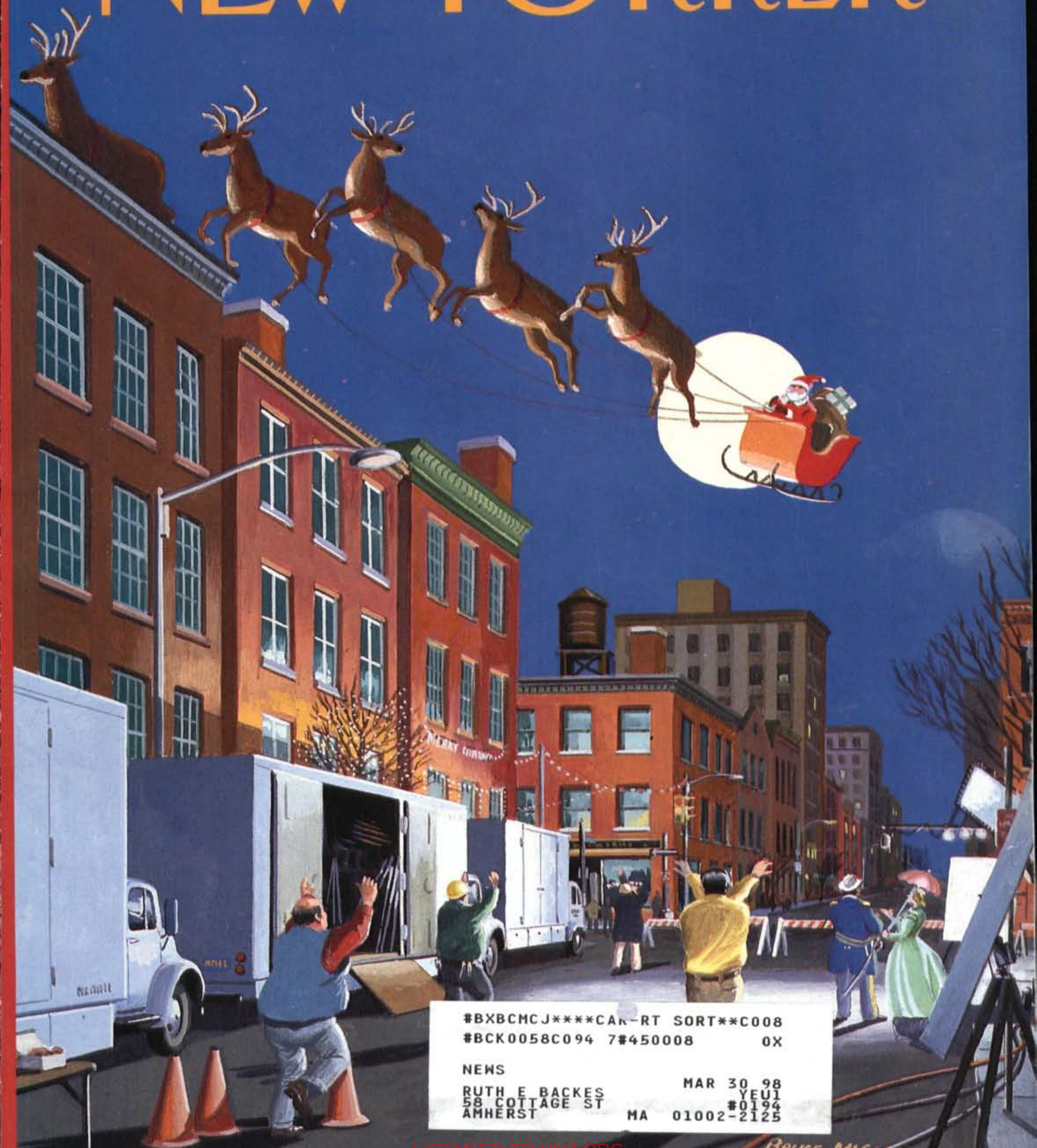
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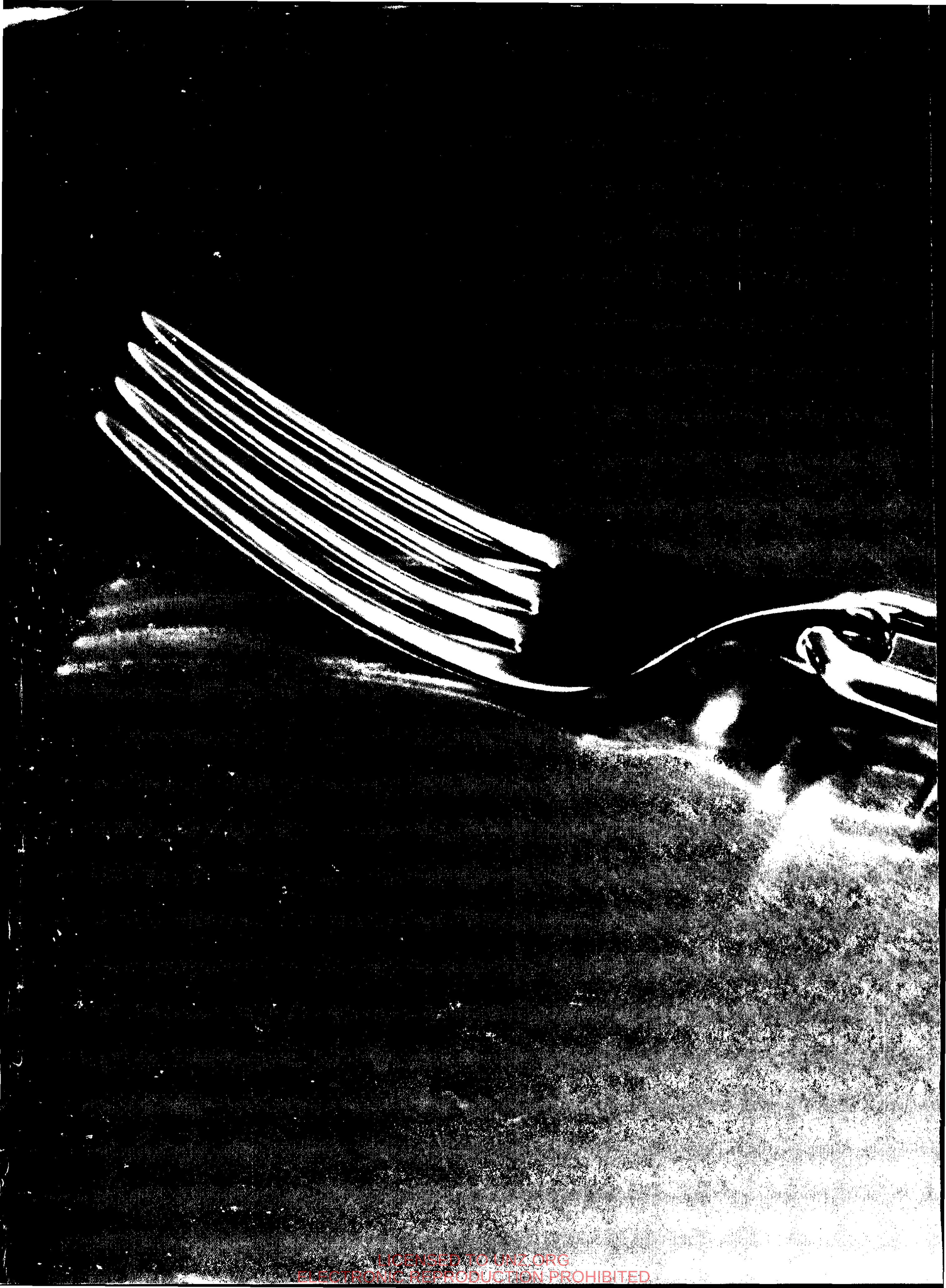

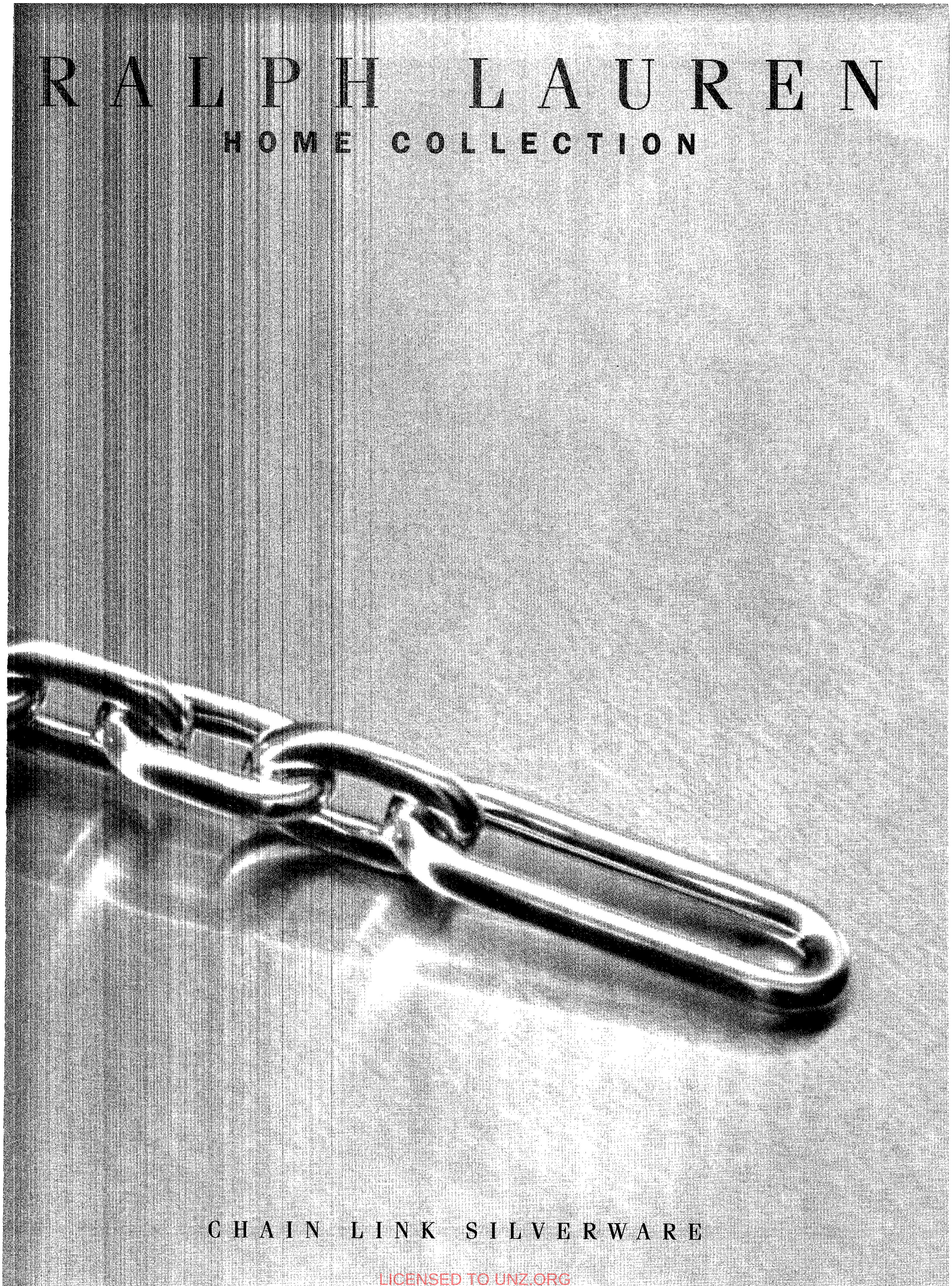
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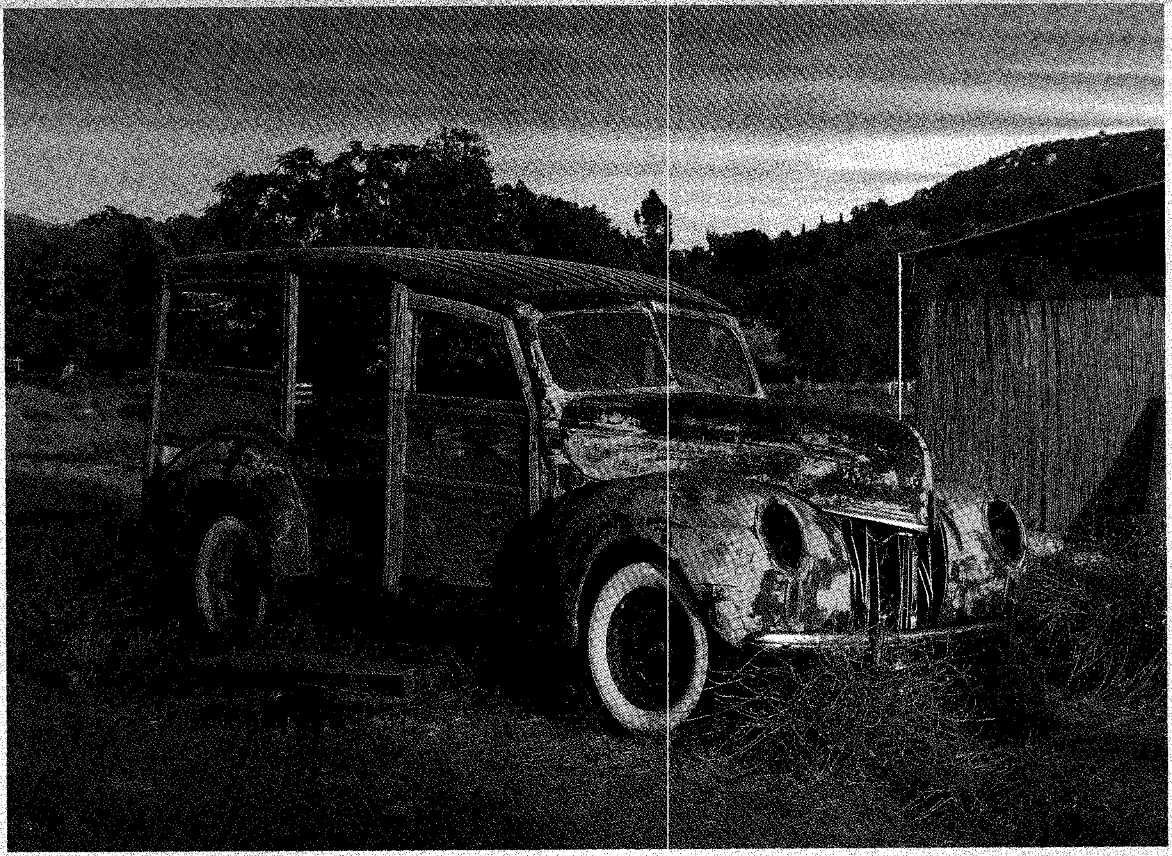

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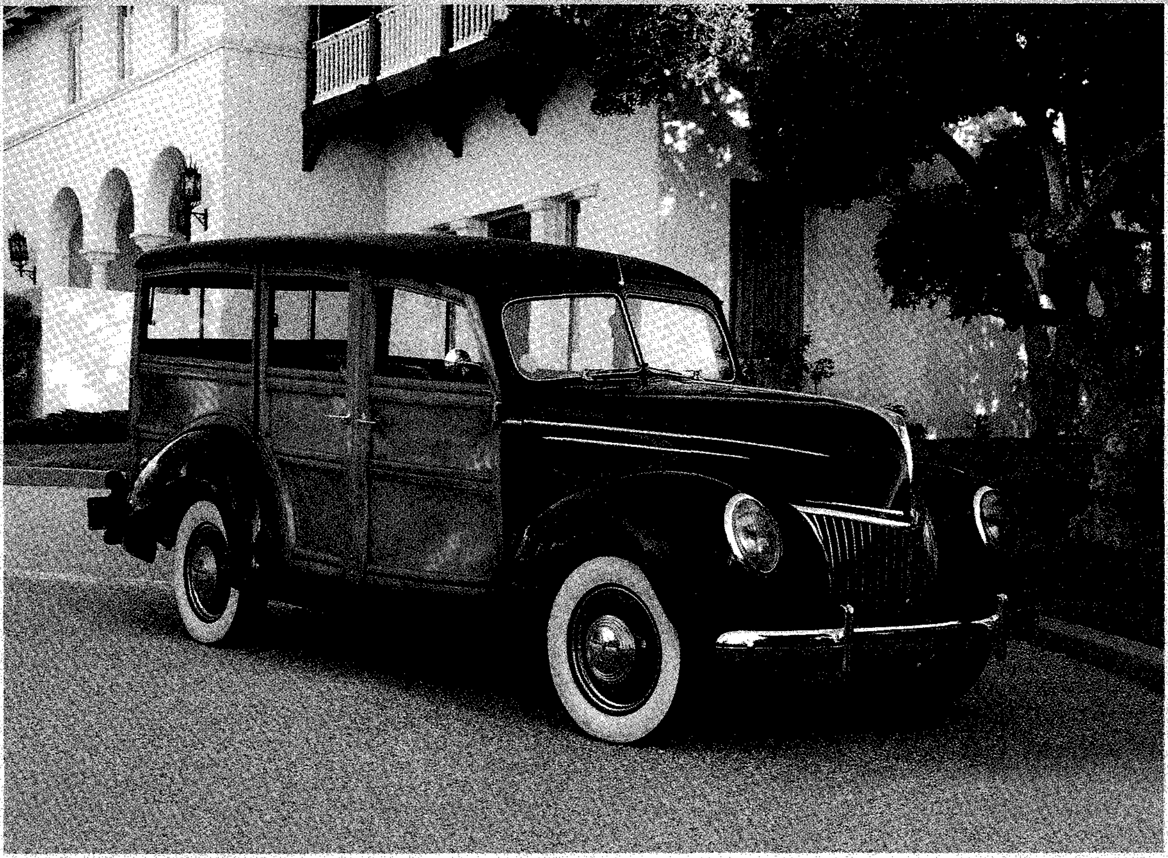

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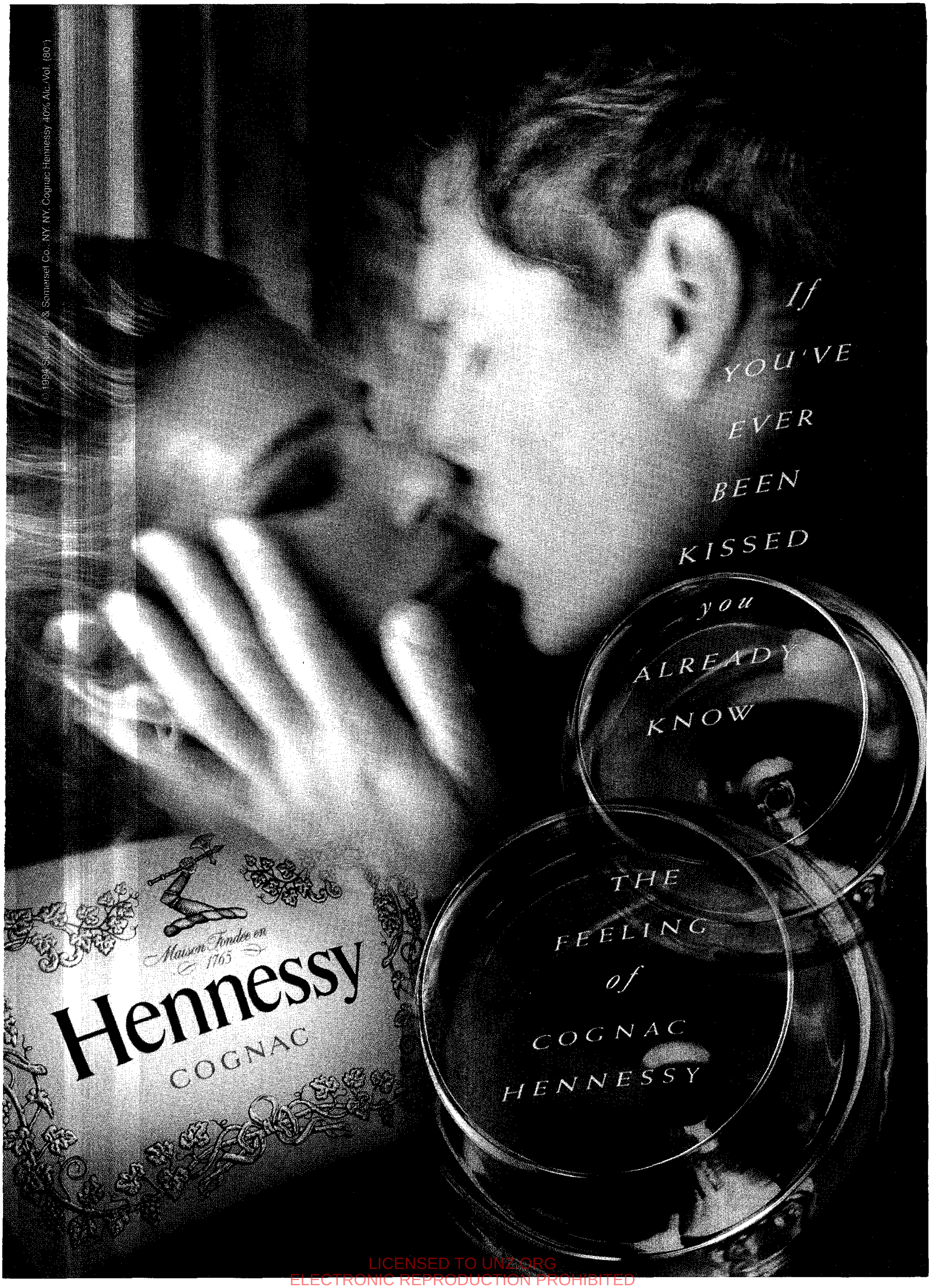
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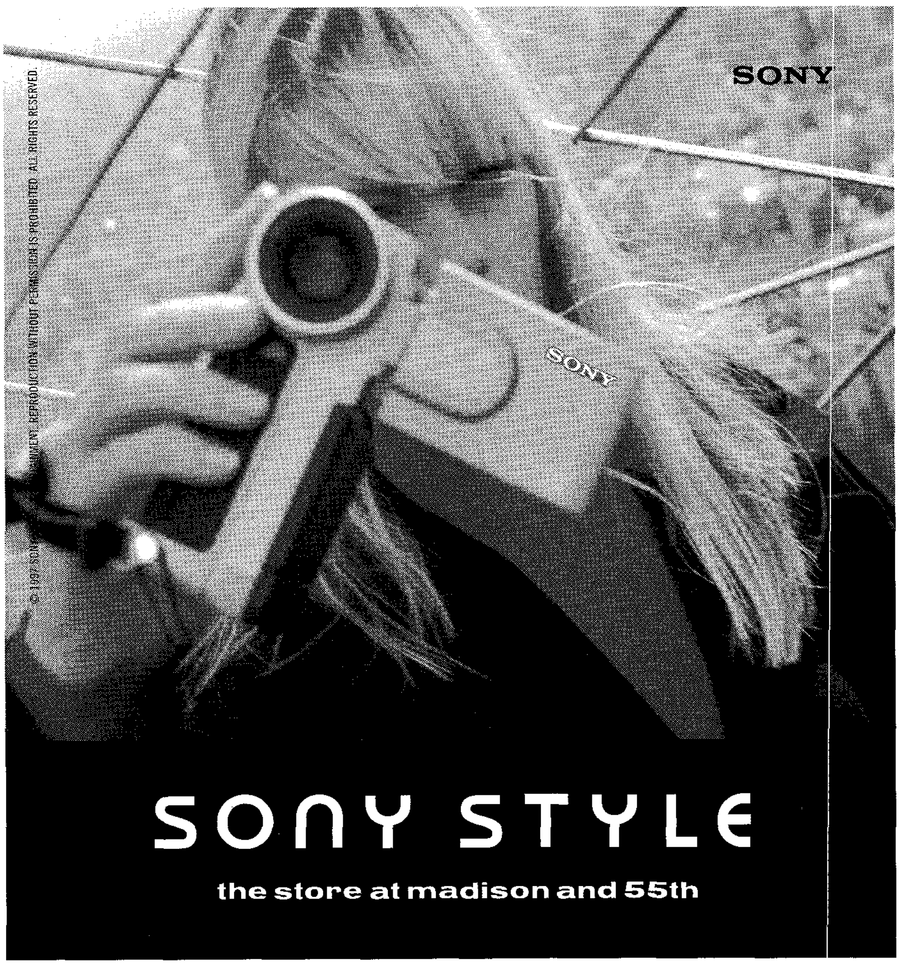
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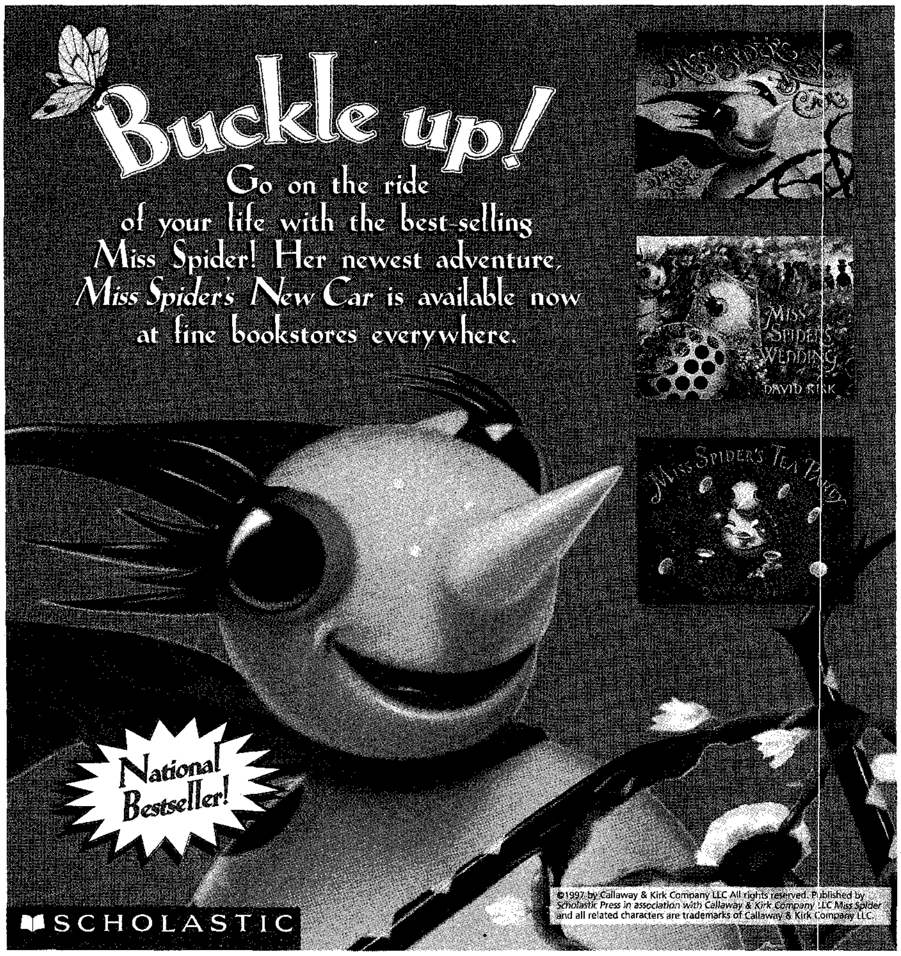

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TASTE OF NEW YORK

The VISA Preferred Guide to Dining

By Susan Breslow Sardone

Manhattan's Upper East Side hosts more than its share of world-class restaurants, and Visa presents three of the most spectacular this week. Under the direction of talented, accomplished chefs, these beautifully appointed spots succeed in entertaining a well-traveled clientele who have found, like Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz," "There's no place like home." Whether you live on East 79th Street, in the East Village, in eastern Connecticut, or lands west, you'll find a visit to any of these restaurants a true culinary journey. Thanks to Visa* and this restaurant program exclusive to* The New Yorker, *every time you charge a meal using your Visa® card at the restaurants participating in this and other "Taste of New York" features, you'll also contribute to Citymeals-on-Wheels, a nonprofit organization that delivers hot meals to the homebound elderly.

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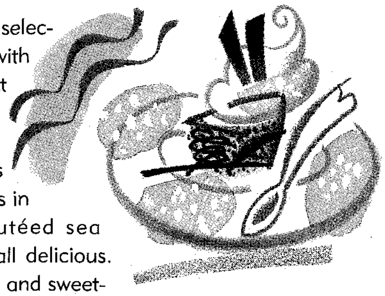

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At a recent lunch, a klatsch of European beauties, a Texas magnate and his wife, a fivesome of young Turks on an expense account, and Helen Gurley Brown were among those gathered to savor the haute Gallic flair of chef Daniel Boulud at Restaurant Daniel. Drawn by his brilliant menu—adventurous, inspired, and without a dull spot—they anticipated one of New York's premier dining experiences. The master chef did not disappoint. The crabmeat salad appetizer, for instance, was refreshed with a perfect balance of cucumber, pineapple, and mint accents. Those who'd awaited the arrival of truffle season savored them as an accompaniment to porcini risotto, a potato baked in sea salt, or a salad of artichokes, potatoes, and lamb's lettuce. As a reward for patrons who'd paced themselves, desserts were artful combinations of sweet and fruity pleasures. A chocolate soufflé with a luscious center, downsized for the hurried nineties, arrived—and vanished—quickly. ★

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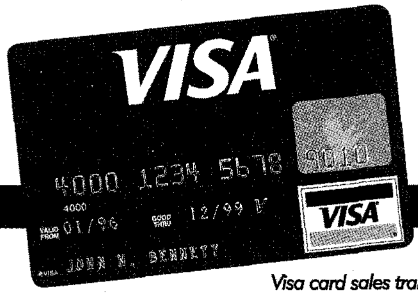

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COMMENT

SWITCHEROO

The Democrats and the Republicans trade places.

THE end of the first session of the hundred-and-fifth Congress, and of the first year of President Clinton's second term, marks the beginning of the midterm election season and also a subtle acceleration in maneuvering before the start of the race for the millennial Presidency. But what will all these campaigns be about?

Politics is more than merely the pursuit of power. At its best, it involves the articulation of noble aspirations, on the one hand, and just causes, on the other. These are not at all the same thing. Noble aspirations are appeals to people's better instincts—to be more charitable, more patriotic, more attentive to children, and so on. The ends are indisputably good, and the preferred means of achieving them—volunteering, exhorting, improving oneself—are unobjectionable. Politicians offer up noble aspirations, because the public likes hearing them, yet noble aspirations are fundamentally apolitical, because they aren't intended to change the political order: their uplifting message accepts things as they are, and asks only that people do their personal best. Movements do not spring from noble aspirations.

Just causes, by contrast, are moral crusades. They are inspired by—and are intended to provoke—indignation. Politicians who espouse just causes typically lead a core of supporters, all of whom share the same programmatic vision, and they call upon the rest of society to convert. Just causes are political in the most basic sense: they seek to change the political order for all time. Political infeasibility at any given moment is no bar; on the contrary, it's the very reason for the causes to exist.

For most of this century, the Democratic Party has been the party of just causes. It claimed to represent the little guy against concentrated power, and the underdogs who were falling behind. It mounted national crusades against the trusts and "economic royalists," declared war on poverty, demanded equal treatment for the excluded. Its victories changed the nation profoundly, by bringing into being a progressive income tax, Social Security, a minimum wage, maximum hours of employment, the right to unionize, safe workplaces, civil rights, health care for the elderly and for the poor, and so on.

The Republican Party of the twen-

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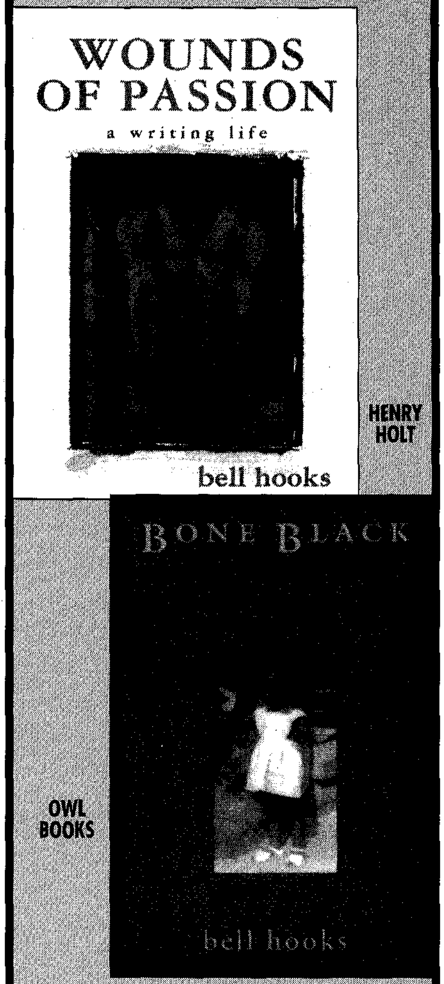
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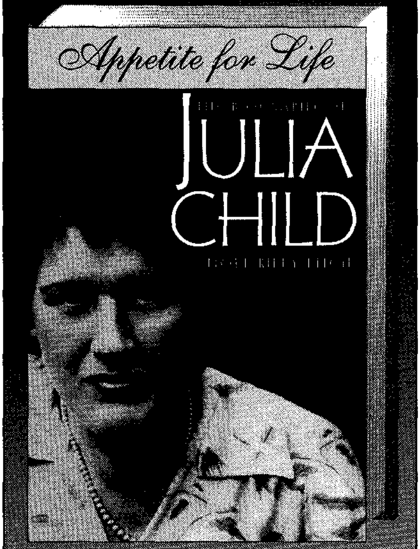

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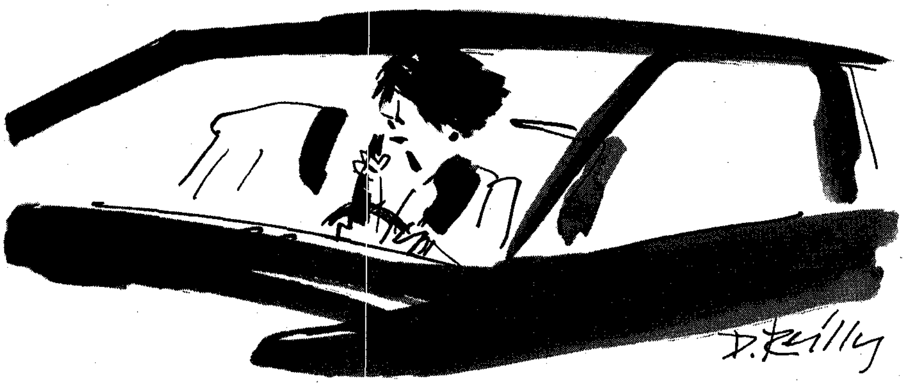


"I'm coming to a tunnel, so goodbye and go to hell."

• •

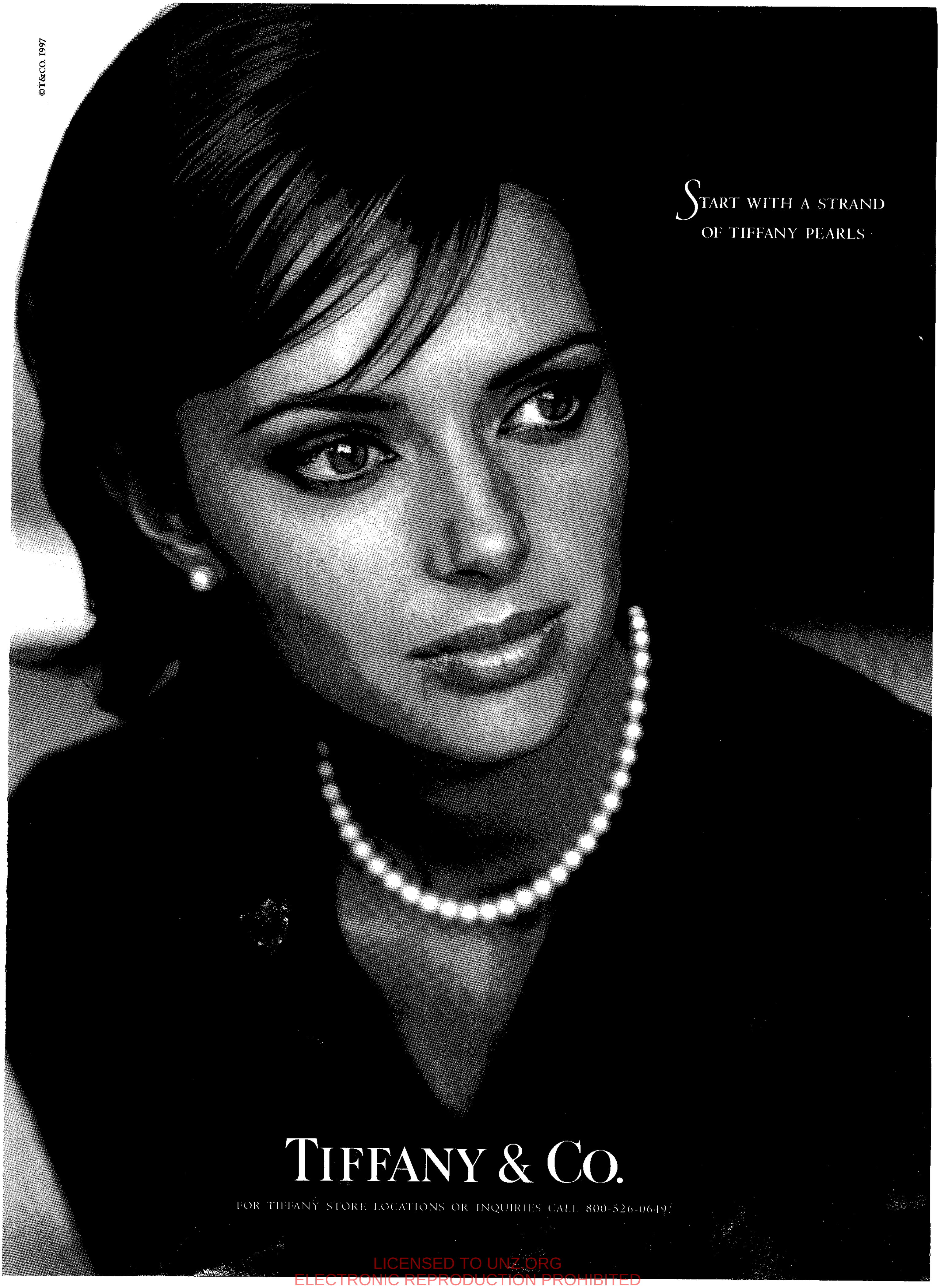
tieth century has been the purveyor of noble aspirations—in marked contrast to the famously just cause into which it was born. Whenever the nation grew exhausted from dealing with just causes, the Grand Old Party allowed it to recuperate within the comfortable certainties of lofty ideals that require no heavy lifting: declamations about thrift and charity, and homilies like George Bush's "thousand points of light" and Ronald Reagan's litany of "the dignity of work, the warmth of family, the strength of neighborhood, and the nourishment of human freedom."

We seem to be engaged now in a fundamental reversal of political temperament. Despite no apparent shortage of just causes—the real median wage today is below what it was in 1989, the poverty rate is higher, more Americans lack health insurance, and people with only a high-school education are poorer—the Democrats show distinct signs of morphing into a party of noble aspirations. Political initiative is being supplanted by kindly exhortation. Companies are being asked to hire poor people taken off welfare, schools to adopt voluntary standards, and community groups to offer safe and affordable child care. And everyone is being asked to enter into a national "dialogue" on race. There is an abundance of conferences, commissions, "town-hall meetings," and workshops on "best practices." (The race initiative, which occupies a niche on the White House Web site, lists organizations offering "promising practices" for racial reconciliation.) The Democrats' well-founded rationale for not offering a more ambitious agenda is that it would be infeasible: there's no money, and the Republicans are in control of Congress.

The Republicans, meanwhile, are busy trying to become the party of just causes, regardless of political feasibility. The G.O.P. leaders of the House spent part of the fall barnstorming across America in what can only be described as a moral crusade against the income tax: they seek to connect the economic difficulties of average working people with the putative injustice of paying taxes and to demonize the Internal Revenue Service (not a difficult task). Another Republican just cause is turning out to be school vouchers for inner-city children—an attempt to align the Party with the poor, and against the teachers' unions and educational bureaucrats. Both crusades are being waged with a righteous fervor that is—to say the least—incompatible with best-practice workshops.

Republicans face a daunting task; zealots make people nervous. Newt Gingrich's popularity ratings are still in the cellar. Moreover, the President has been adept at neutralizing inchoate Republican just causes by turning them into noble aspirations ("The era of big government is over") as deftly as he has sucked indignation out of traditionally Democratic just causes. And yet Democrats have reason to be worried. When just causes become movements, they mobilize voters, and the results in 1998 and in 2000 will be highly dependent on who bothers to vote. Noble aspirations may warm the heart, but just causes put fire in the belly.

—ROBERT B. REICH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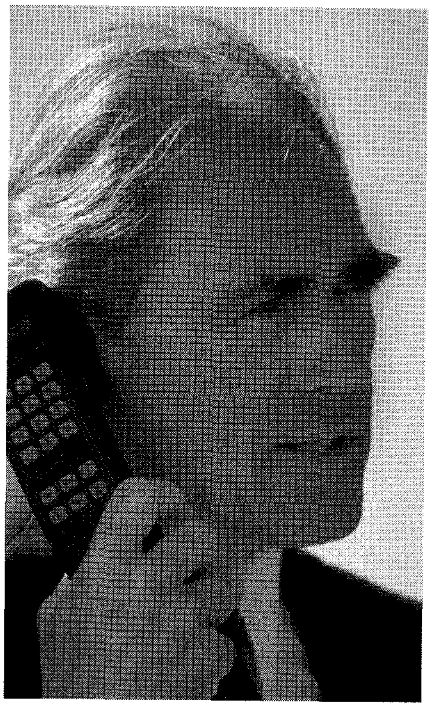

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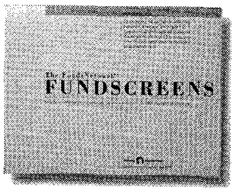

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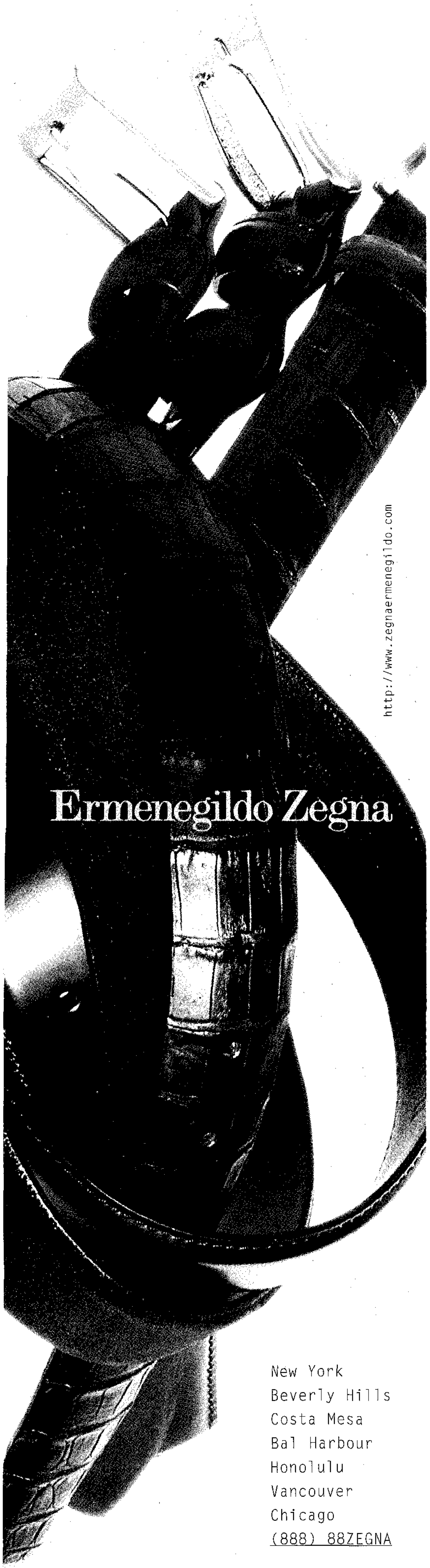

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THE MAIL

MOMMY TRACKS

Like Stacy Schiff ("The Runaway Mother," November 10th), I have young children and career conflicts, and I have often wondered about the missing or incompetent mothers in children's literature. But where Schiff sees adventure and possibility for children in these stories I see abandonment and danger. "Hansel and Gretel," for instance, has been passed down for generations not because children want to get lost in the forest but because it reassures children that if their worst subconscious fears should come to pass they will be O.K. Likewise, the prevalence of wonderful nannies in children's stories doesn't mean that nannies are wonderful but that children like stories in which they are compensated for their parents' absence: if they can't be with Mom or Dad, they should get tea parties on the ceiling with Mary Poppins. Real-life nannies, though, have real-life limitations, and, while they may offer our children different views of life, hired caregivers are not as good as the real thing.

M. ABBOTT GRUEN
Larchmont, N.Y.

Why does Ms. Schiff resort to statements such as "children simply don't venture down rabbit holes with the people who gave birth to them in tow" to justify the way she has structured her family life? As a stay-at-home parent, I object: my son and I spend hours playing creative games and sharing imaginary adventures. I am all for women working if they choose or need to, but Schiff's interpretation of children's literature, interesting as it is, applies only to the complexity of her particular situation and not to other family configurations.

J. STRONG
Santa Cruz, Calif.

ONE MAN, THREE VIEWS

Simon Schama's review of my exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art "Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection, Vienna" (A Critic at Large, November 10th), in presenting a view of the artist diametrically opposed to mine, included quotes from the catalogue which were attributed to me. However, the quotes in question do not come from the portion of the text that I wrote. They were written by the collector of the paintings, Dr. Rudolf Leopold, and do not represent my opinions.

MAGDALENA DABROWSKI
Senior Curator, Department of Drawings
The Museum of Modern Art
New York City

ADAMS FAMILY VALUES

Gore Vidal's article on John Quincy Adams ("Reel History," November 10th) reminded me of my own favorite Adams pronouncement: After hearing of Admiral Stephen Decatur's toast "Our country, right or wrong," Adams responded, in a letter to his father, "I disclaim all patriotism incompatible with the principles of eternal justice." Long may he rave.

ALAN THOMSON
Brooklyn, N.Y.

RHYME SCHEMES

In John Lahr's Talk of the Town story about Susan Birkenhead, the lyricist for "Triumph of Love" (November 10th), Birkenhead is quoted as saying that she is "trying to marry elegance and vulgarity in a graceful way." Then, picking up "The New Comprehensive American Rhyming Dictionary," she goes on to say, "This is my secret. Sondheim will tell you different. But he's wrong."

Apart from being impressed by Birkenhead's clairvoyant certainty, I'm confused. Will I claim that she is not trying to marry elegance and vulgarity? Or that using that particular rhyming dictionary is not her secret? (I use Clement Wood myself.) In any event, I look forward to finding out what I'm going to say next.

STEPHEN SONDHEIM
New York City

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE HOLIDAYS

SEASONAL SPECIALTIES

"The Radio City Christmas Spectacular"—The current edition includes ninety minutes of lights, action, camels, sheep, donkeys, and other live animals, dancing Santas, and, inevitably, the Rockettes. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Through Jan. 4.)

"A Christmas Carol"—Hal Linden and Roddy McDowall alternate as Scrooge in a musical version of Dickens's holiday tale. Alan Menken wrote the score. (Madison Square Garden. 307-4111. Through Jan. 4.) . . . ¶ On Dec. 7 at 2, Gregg Whiteside, of classical-music radio station WQXR, reads the tale from Dickens's original 1843 manuscript, at the Morgan Library, where those pages are on view through Jan. 4. (29 E. 36th St. For tickets to the reading, call 685-0008, ext. 347.)

Nutcrackers—In addition to the New York City Ballet performances (through Jan. 4; see Dance listings), several other plummy versions of the ballet are available. A dance-along "Nutcracker," at the New Dance Group Arts Center, gives children the chance to join the Rat King chases and the snowflake flurries—gratis. (254 W. 47th St. 719-2733. Dec. 14 at 2.). . . ¶ "The Yorkville Nutcracker," choreographed by Francis Patrelle (and danced with the help of a few moonlighters from City Ballet), transposes the action to New York. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 18-19 at 7 and Dec. 20-21 at 2 and 7.). . . ¶ A child-friendly version by the New York Theatre Ballet, geared for audiences ages three to six, goes on pointe at Florence Gould Hall. (55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Dec. 20-21 and Dec. 27-29 at 1 and 3:30.)

Holiday Stuffing—The Vermont-based Bread and Puppet Theatre tells its version of the Christmas story, "Delivery," with dozens upon dozens of puppets, some more than fifteen feet tall. (Los Kabayitos Puppet Theatre, C.S.V. Cultural Center, 107 Suffolk St. 260-4080, ext. 14. Dec. 11-21.)

Trees—Beverly Sills hosts the lighting of Lincoln Center's forty-foot blue spruce, at a ceremony in which the gospel singer Cissy Houston belts out "O Christmas Tree" and Big Bird, Elmo, and other "Sesame Street" characters join in for renditions of other holiday favorites. (Fountain Plaza. Dec. 4 at 7.) . . . ¶ The New York University Brass Ensemble and neighborhood carollers accompany the lighting of a forty-foot balsam fir beneath the Arch in Washington Square Park. (Dec. 9 at 6.) . . . ¶ A twenty-foot artificial blue spruce laced with eighteenth-century Neapolitan angels has taken up residency in the Metropolitan Museum's Medieval Court. There's also a baroque crèche on view, and a lighting ceremony every Friday and Saturday at 7. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. Through Jan. 4.) . . . ¶ The South Street Seaport's singing Christmas tree comes to life with the sounds of the St. Cecilia Chorus. (East River at Fulton St. Fridays at 6:30 and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 and 3:30. Through Dec. 28.) . . . ¶ And in Rockefeller Center, seventy-four feet of Norway spruce light up the night through Jan. 4.

"Navidad Flamenca: Gypsy Christmas"—A six-member troupe from Andalusia, led by the singer and dancer Aurora Vargas (whom Carlos Saura featured in his recent film, "Flamenco") and by the singer Pansequito. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Dec. 5-6 at 8 and Dec. 7 at 3.)

"Bending Towards the Light . . . A Jazz Nativity"—We three kings bebop into Bethlehem. The all-star cast features Lionel Hampton, Clark Terry, Tito Puente, Stanley Turrentine, and Jon Faddis. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Dec. 7 at 5 and 8 and Dec. 8-9 at 8. Continues through Dec. 30.)

"La Cantata dei Pastori"—Singers, dancers, commedia-dell'arte characters, and an Archangel Gabriel on stilts are among the performers in an adaptation of Andrea Perruci's seventeenth-century Neapolitan Christmas play by the Italian folk-music and theatre troupe I Giullari di Piazza. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 924-0077. Dec. 6 at 8 and Dec. 7 at 3.)

Get Animated—The American Museum of the Moving Image presents a festival of holiday shorts by a group of animators which includes Chuck Jones ("How the Grinch Stole Christmas"), Tex Avery ("The Peachy Cobbler"), and the folks at Disney ("The Night Before Christmas," "Once Upon a Wintertime," and "Mickey's Christmas Carol"). (35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. 718-784-0077. Dec. 20-Jan. 2.)

A Christmas Story—The desk on which Clement Clarke Moore wrote "A Visit from St. Nicholas" and the original manuscript of the poem are the centerpieces of the New-York Historical Society's holiday offerings. On Dec. 6, from noon to 4, there's a free open house, with light refreshments and a special reading of Moore's work, and, on Dec. 14 at 2, Stephen Nissenbaum, author of "The Battle for Christmas," shows how Thomas Nast, John Pintard, Washington Irving, and other prominent New Yorkers created the globe-trotting, present-giving St. Nick we know today and thereby transformed the holiday. (2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. 873-3400.)

Hanukkah—As darkness descends on Dec. 23, the first flame will burn on the thirty-two-foot menorah at Fifth Ave. and 59th St. New lights will be added each evening through Dec. 31, with singing, dancing, and hot latkes for all on Dec. 28 at 5:30. (For more information, call 718-778-6000.)

Kwanzaa—Malika Lee Whitney, an arts and education consultant and writer, leads afternoons of storytelling, instrument making, and other activities for children and adults in a celebration of the holiday. (Charles A. Dana Discovery Center, Harlem Meer, Central Park. 860-1370. Dec. 26-28 and Dec. 30-31 from 2 to 4.) . . . ¶ Dancers and musicians gather at a traditional African marketplace at the American Museum of Natural History. (Central Park W. at 79th St. 769-5100. Dec. 28 from noon to 6.)

Northern and Southern Lights—The Bronx Zoo stays open after dark, throwing the switch on more than fifty lighted sculptures up to twenty feet tall of tigers, birds, elephants, and other animals. They have live reindeer and camels up there, too. (Bronx River Parkway at Fordham Rd., the Bronx. 718-367-1010. Daily 5:30-9, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9:30. Through Jan. 4.) . . . ¶ Landscape architect Ken Smith and Jim Conti, professor of interior design at Pratt Institute, illuminate Liberty Plaza Park with their work entitled "Glowing Topiary Garden," a collection of lighted cones ranging in height from sixteen to twenty-five feet. (Liberty St. between Broadway and Trinity Pl. Dec. 15-Jan. 31.)

Holiday Tracks—Inside the New York Botanical Garden's conservatory, large-scale model trains wind past a towering castle, waterfalls, and fanciful reproductions of New York City landmarks. Master puppeteer Ralph Lee presents his version of "The Little Engine That Could." And Thomas the Tank Engine is on hand. (Bronx Park. 718-817-8700. Through Jan. 4.)

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

(See also this week's Classical Music listings.)

Handel's "Messiah"—We have our eyes on the performances at Trinity Church (Broadway at Wall St., 602-0873; Dec. 13-14 at 3) and St. Thomas Church (Fifth Ave. at 53rd St., 757-7013, ext. 329; Dec. 16 and Dec. 18 at 7:30). And let's not forget the Concordia Orchestra's annual jazzy updating, "Too Hot to Handel." (Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; Dec. 23 at 8).

BachWorks—This vocal and period-instrument ensemble celebrates the season with the composer its members love best. The program includes excerpts from Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" as well as his Canonic Variations on "Vom Himmel hoch" (composed exactly a quarter of a millennium ago). (St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. Dec. 13 at 5. Tickets at the door.)

"The Three Cantors"—Move over, Pavarotti, Domingo, and Carreras, and make way for Abelson, Mendelson, and Zim, at least in the week before Hanukkah. (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. Dec. 14 at 2.)

Seasonal Catch-Alls—Among oodles of grab-bag Christmas concerts, we're betting on those by the Virgin Consort (performing Palestrina, Poulenc, and more at the Church of the Holy Family, 315 E. 47th St., 754-2395; Dec. 16 at 8) and by the American Boychoir, the St. Bartholomew's Choir, and the Gabrieli Brass ensemble (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St., 378-0248; Dec. 17 at 7:30).

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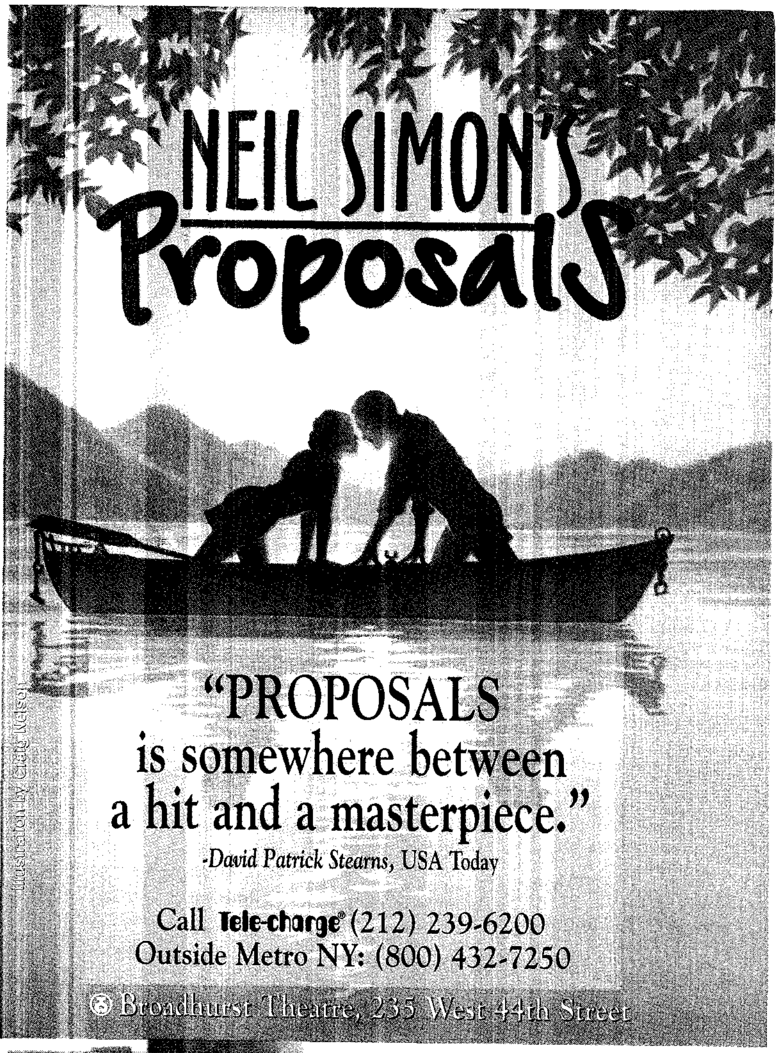

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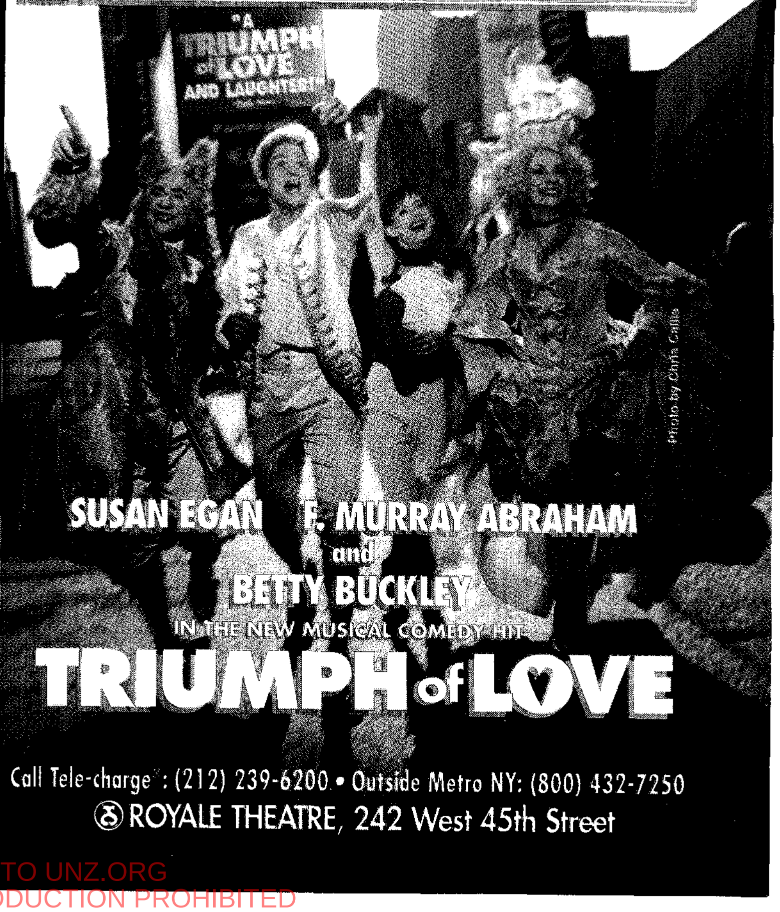

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Bashevis: Tales of I. B. Singer—David Margulies stars in a performance of three of the author's short stories adapted for the stage. In previews through Dec. 6. Opens Dec. 9 at 8. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

The Capeman—A musical by Paul Simon and Derek Walcott, based on the life of Salvador Agron, a New York gang member who in 1959, at sixteen, was sentenced to death for murder. Directed and choreographed by Mark Morris. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Clue: The Musical—The board game hits the boards. Opens Dec. 3 at 8. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

Cyrano de Bergerac—Frank Langella directs, and dons the schnozz in, his own adaptation of Rostand's romantic drama, from a translation by Brian Hooker. In previews through Dec. 8. Opens Dec. 9 at 7:30. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Diary of Anne Frank—Natalie Portman stars in a new adaptation, by Wendy Kesselman, of Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's 1955 play. James Lapine is the director. Two previews on Dec. 3. Opens Dec. 4 at 6:45. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Eight by Tens—An evening of eight ten-minute works, which originated at the Actors Theatre of Louisville. Opens Dec. 3 at 8. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 802-4557.)

Goose-Pimples—Scott Elliott directs the New Group's season opener, a 1981 comedy by Mike Leigh. In previews. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Jump Cut (Faust)—A multimedia adaptation of the German legend, written by John Jesurun and directed by Marianne Weems. Opens Dec. 3 at 8 and runs through Dec. 20. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. 966-9520.)

Mud, River, Stone—An African-American couple becomes stranded while vacationing in South Africa, in a new drama by Lynn Nottage. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Pearls for Pigs—The avant-garde dramatist Richard Foreman's latest mind-bender begins a five-week engagement at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center on Dec. 3 at 8. (199 Chambers St. 279-4200.)

Pride's Crossing—A ninety-year-old woman who once swam the English Channel (Cherry Jones) relives the stages of her life, in Tina Howe's new play, directed by Jack O'Brien. In previews through the Dec. 7 matinée. Opens that night at 7:30. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Sunshine Boys—Jack Klugman and Tony Randall team up again, in a revival of Neil Simon's 1972 comedy about two former vaudevillians. John Tillinger is the director. In previews through Dec. 7. Opens Dec. 8 at 7. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Uncle Tom's Cabin—Randolph Curtis Rand and Floraine Kay's adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, staged by the Drama Dept. Previews begin Dec. 4. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 541-8441.)

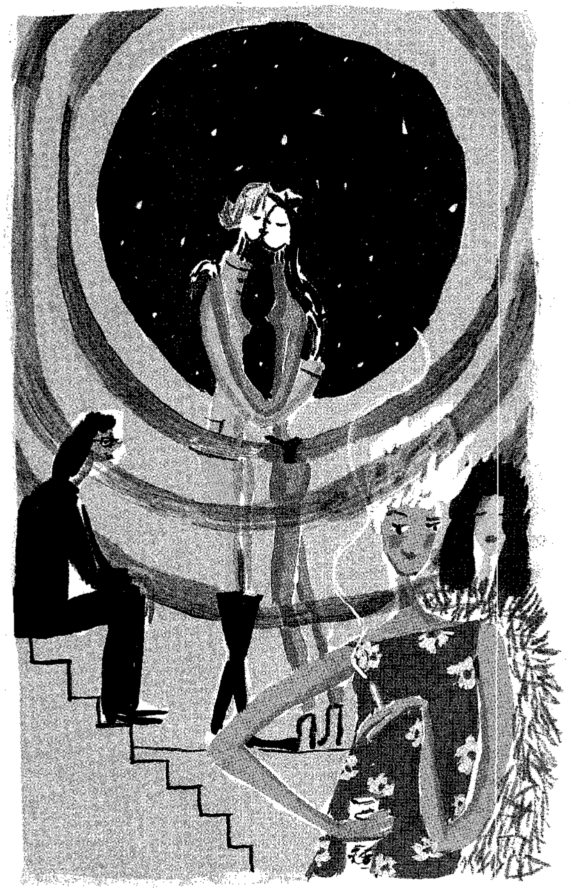
A View from the Bridge—Michael Mayer ("Triumph of Love") directs Anthony LaPaglia, Allison Janney, and Stephen Spinella in the Roundabout's revival of Arthur Miller's modern tragedy. In previews. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach portrays a Jewish widower who is befriended by his young neighbor (David Alan Basche), in a drama by Jeff Baron. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

Women. War. Comedy—A staging by Joseph Chaikin's Other Theatre of the German playwright Thomas Brasch's epic drama. Opens Dec. 4 at 8. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Alligator Tales—Anne Galjour, the author of and sole performer in this ambitious play about a group of eight folks in South Louisiana, is a talented storyteller. But the procession of natural disasters which provides the work's narrative glue eventually grows tiresome. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Dec. 7.)



The Five Lesbian Brothers, in "Brides of the Moon."

Always . . . Patsy Cline—Not quite a revue, not quite a play, this spirited and Nashville-slick celebration of the late, great country singer is, rather, a streamlined song-delivery device. Starring Tori Lynn Palazola. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 7.)

As Bees in Honey Drown—J. Smith-Cameron is hilarious as a flimflam woman, in Douglas Carter Beane's comic indictment of America's obsession with fame; the script's satirical power sours only when, every once in a while, it takes itself too seriously. Mark Brokaw directed. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

The Ballad of Yachiyo—Philip Kan Gotanda's new play, based on his aunt's life, is the tale of seventeen-year-old Yachiyo, the daughter of Japanese immigrants in Hawaii, who is sent away from home and boyfriend to learn the tea ceremony; she falls in love with a married man and comes to a bad end. The script tends toward melodrama, but touching scenes and incisive performances take it beyond simple-minded entertainment. Deftly directed by Sharon Ott. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Dec. 7.)

The Batting Cage—In Joan Ackermann's compelling play, set in a Holiday Inn in Florida, two sisters meet for the purpose of scattering their other sister's ashes. They are as unalike as can be: the older one (Veanne Cox) is high-strung and given to preening and to self-absorbed, and often hilarious, yammering; the younger one (Babo Harrison) is schlumpy and strangely silent. This may sound like a classic sitcom setup, but the play has genuine surprise and a soul. Under the excellent direction of Lisa Peterson, Cox and Harrison are perfect. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/24/97.) (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Dec. 7.)

Brides of the Moon—Four spacewomen and a monkey are stranded on Uranus, in a sci-fi comedy by the Five Lesbian Brothers. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Defying Gravity—Jane Anderson has based her new drama on the disastrous launching, in 1986, of the space shuttle Challenger. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

A Dybbuk; or, Between Two Worlds—Tony Kushner's adaptation of S. Ansky's 1920 play, based on the Yiddish folk tale about predestination and the paths to God, doesn't have as much of Kushner's powerful, playful language as you might expect (and eventually all the nods to the Holocaust become heavy-handed). However, Brian Kulick's strong-minded direction, Naomi Goldberg's evocative choreography, and a clever set by Mark Wendland give the evening a vital force. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Dec. 7.)

Filumena—Maria Tucci co-stars with Tony Amendola in her own adaptation of Eduardo DeFilippo's 1946 romantic comedy. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 7.)

Forever Tango—This stepchild of Vegas and Buenos Aires, created and directed by Luis Bravo, gets everything right. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Hallow'd Ground—A one-man show about Abe Lincoln, starring Richard Bourg. (Gene Frankel Theatre, 24 Bond St. 279-4200.)

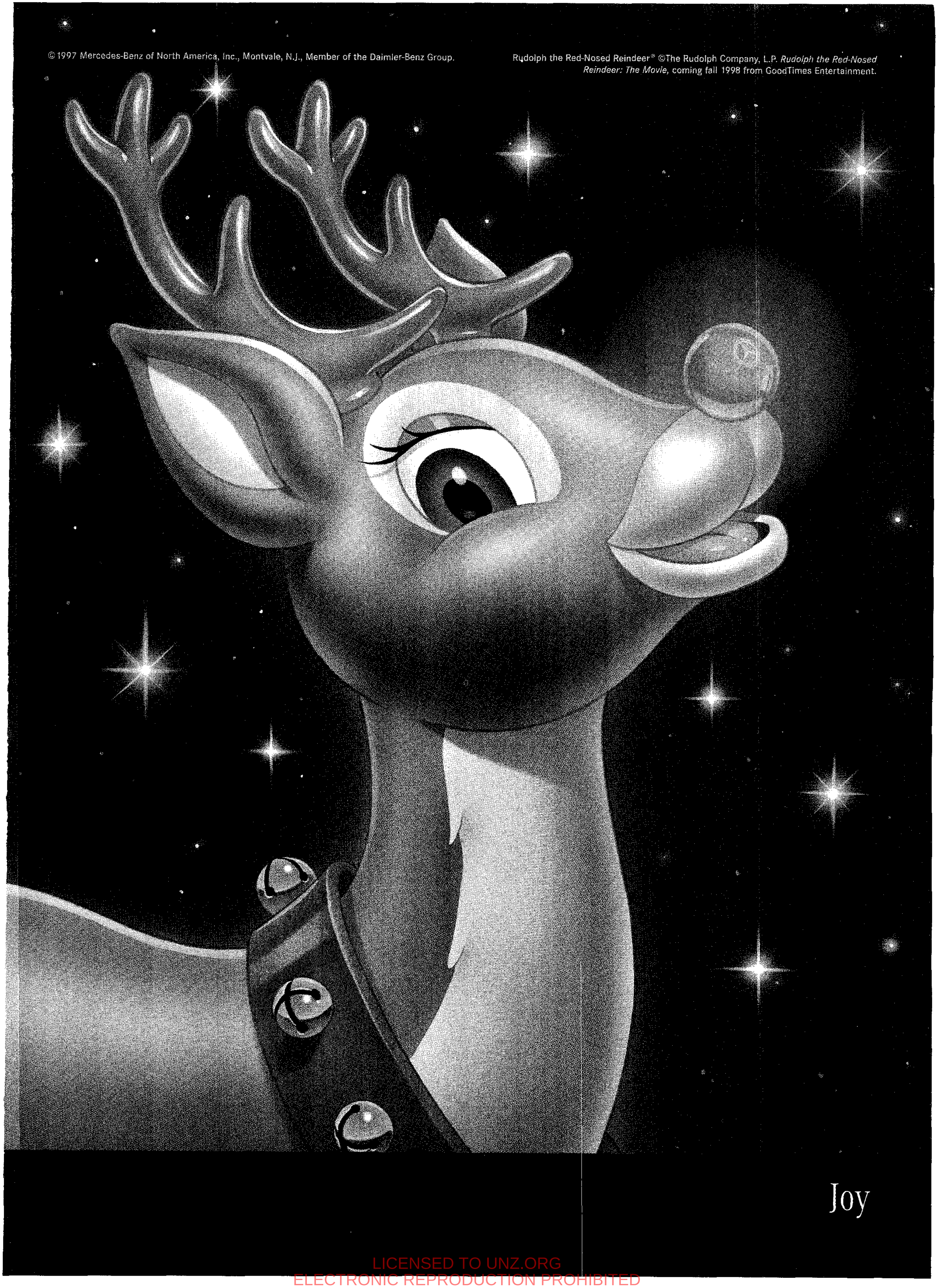
I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—A mean little cocktail from Sandra Bernhard, composed of equal parts stand-up, performance art, cabaret, world-weariness, and dish. Bernhard's insider status in the fashion and entertainment worlds has not dulled her cynicism about them, nor has it softened her critiques. She is a conflicted soul whose octopus mind reaches out for anything (as she would mockingly put it) new! and fresh! The cracks in the plaster holding her many selves together sometimes reveal an unexpected vulnerability and gentleness; still, as she lays bare her personalities and spins the web of her takes on popular culture, she maintains complete control from her spike-heeled perch. (Westbeth Theatre Center. 151 Bank St. 307-7171.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—A good-natured if somewhat choppy revue by Frank McCourt, author of the best-selling memoir "Angela's Ashes," performed by a versatile and charming cast of six singers and musicians. Deftly directed by Charlotte Moore. An Irish Repertory Theatre production) (Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Ivanov—Because American actors have trouble inhaling the nihilistic ozone of Chekhov, Gerald Gutierrez's production looks authentic (thanks to John Lee Beatty's handsome set) but doesn't feel it. Kevin Kline powerfully conveys the honesty and intelligence of the title character but not his raw, nervy, spiritually deracinated mood of decline. Jayne Atkinson and Hope Davis fare no better. The crisp adaptation is by David Hare. (12/1/97) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Jackie—A complete delight. The playwright, Gip Hoppe, may be satirizing what we think we know about the former First Lady, but he does it with such heart and high comedy that you may not want to leave the theatre. His version of Jackie is a well-bred, intelligent woman surrounded by crazies—especially us, the public. (The show opens with a frenzied auction of Brillo pads and other items from under Jackie's sink.) Richard Nixon, Truman Capote, and a bevy of toothy Kennedys make appearances; a wizened Hugh Auchincloss (portrayed by a puppet, of all things) is side-splittingly funny. Margaret Colin leads the gifted cast, and Hoppe, who

BETH ADAMS



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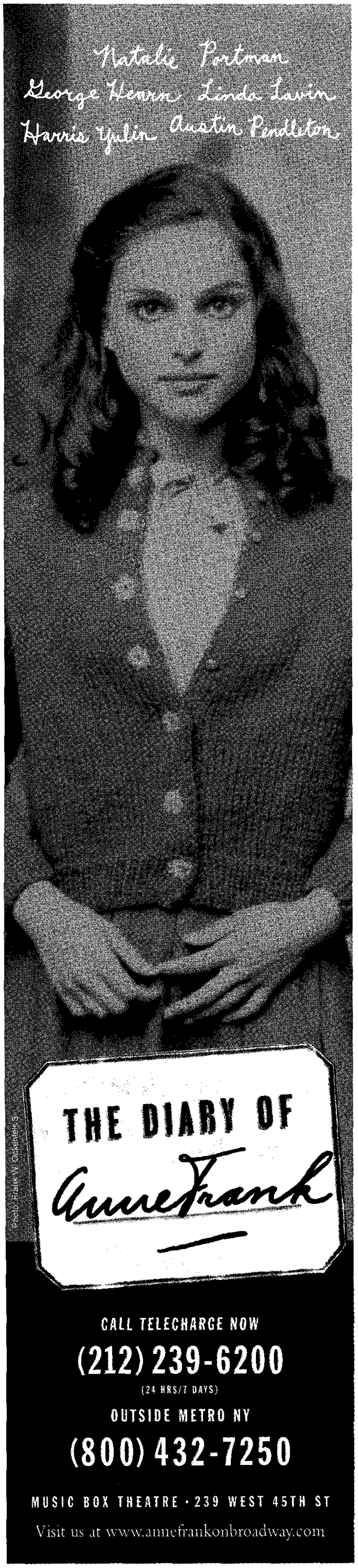

Natalie Portman
George Hearn Linda Lavin
Harris Yulin Austin Pendleton

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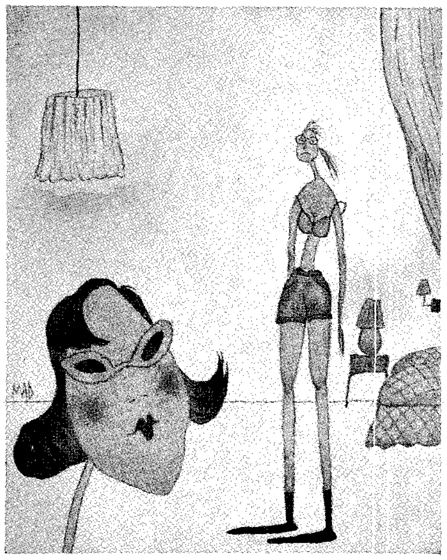
also directed, is aided and abetted in this zaniness by the set designer David Gallo. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Last Session—A reworked version of a musical by Steve Schalchlin (music and lyrics) and Jim Brochu (book), about an AIDS-afflicted songwriter's final studio work. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor has proved to Disney that taking the high theatrical road can be a good business decision. On a superb protean set by Richard Hudson, she uses a wide range of puppet styles, African-inspired fabrics, Zulu chants, and borrowed but effective avant-garde staging tricks to create a theatrical event far more textured and original than the animated film. Taymor submerges the audience in a mythic universe; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. Garth Fagan is the choreographer. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)



Veanne Cox and Babo Harrison, in "The Batting Cage."

A Madhouse in Goa—Judith Ivey leads the cast in a drama of intrigue by Martin Sherman ("Bent"), which takes place over two decades on two Greek islands. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3392. Closes Dec. 7.)

Major Barbara—Shaw's often maligned disquisition on faith, money, and the good uses of hypocrisy has received a spectacular revival at the hands of Tony Walton, the director and designer of this Irish Repertory Theatre production. It's fast and funny, with the serious parts, in which the poor people whom Major Barbara (of the Salvation Army) is trying to save explain their views of the world, seamlessly integrated with the comedy of the scenes in which the rich do the same. Mr. Walton is assisted by a uniformly wonderful cast, including Melissa Errico, Boyd Gaines, Jack Ryland, and Rob Sedgwick, who is splendid in two roles that couldn't be more different. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The mind reader takes volunteers from the audience in his show of telepathic feats. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Mojo—Two parts Mamet, one part Pinter, and a smattering of Shepard, mixed together by the young Briton Jez Butterworth. Two pill-popping spivs (Patrick Fitzgerald and Matthew Ross) think they've hit pay dirt when they discover a young rocker, only to end up under siege when the occasion turns into a gangland rubout. The characters converse in a flashy, garbled Cockney that's as unreal as the story's premise. Neil Pepe is the director. (12/1/97) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Dec. 21.)

The Mother—The Irondale Ensemble Project takes on Brecht's 1932 play about a Russian widow who becomes a revolutionary. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 633-1292. Closes Dec. 20.)

Never the Sinner—A drama by John Logan, about the sensational 1924 trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays full of laughter and lament. Well acted by Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Rebecca Pidgeon, and Jack Willis, and crisply directed by Scott Zigler. Serious, beautiful, and short: an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Proposals—Neil Simon's new play is set at the summer home of a family that has been disrupted by divorce and is about to be further shaken by death. Although the wisecracks rely on Catskills-era ethnic stereotypes from which all the humor has long been drained, there is real feeling here—a softly sad, end-of-summer feeling—and it's brought out very capably by L. Scott Caldwell, who plays the family's long-time housekeeper, and by Dick Latessa, as a divorced father who's still in love with his former wife. The cast, under the direction of Joe Mantello, also includes Kelly Bishop, Suzanne Cryer, and Mel Winkler. The tremendously evocative set and lighting, by John Lee Beatty and Brian MacDevitt, give this family's story an almost fairy-tale-like timelessness. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Scarlet Pimpernel—This new musical, based on the Baroness Orczy novel, has a lot going for it if you don't count its music and lyrics, which are dreadful and appalling, respectively. Its charismatic star, Douglas Sills, is new to Broadway yet possesses the brio of a Stewart Granger and a good voice to boot. Andrew Jackness's sets are top-drawer, and Jane Greenwood's costumes are sensational. Nan Knighton, who committed the crime of the lyrics, also wrote the book, which is quite good. Frank Wildhorn, of "Jekyll & Hyde" fame, wrote the music. Peter Hunt directed. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

1776—Scott Ellis's lean, lively production of Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone's still fresh 1969 musical about the drafting of the Declaration of Independence reopens at the Gershwin on Dec. 3. It is possibly the most entertaining and the wittiest history lesson you've ever received. (9/8/97) (51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Side Show—A promising premise for a musical—the story of Violet and Daisy Hilton, Siamese twins who grew up in the world of carnivals and became a vaudeville act in the thirties—flattened by bombastic shlock rock, an unimaginative set, and a book that reduces the sisters' entire existence to a pulp-romance plot. Nevertheless, most of the actors manage to carry themselves with dignity. (11/3/97) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Street Corner Symphony—A revue of music and dance from the sixties and seventies, directed by Marion J. Caffey. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Tell-Tale—Theatre Couture's comic thriller puts a drag spin on Edgar Allan Poe. Sherry Vine and Jackie Beat are the stars. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

Three Days of Rain—There's a deeply felt, unutterable sadness at the core of Richard Greenberg's play, in which three no longer young people try to sort out the legacy left to them by their parents. John Slattery gives an astonishingly moving performance as an articulate and ironic lost soul; Patricia Clarkson is good as his more stable sister; and Bradley Whitford is terrific as his oldest friend. Every element of this production, which was directed by Evan Yionoulis, rings true, right down to Chris Barreca's set, a SoHo loft that's so forlorn it practically moans. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Triumph of Love—A musical adaptation of the 1732 Marivaux farce which brims with intelligence, feeling, musicality, and wit. The characters are more or less stock types, but the actors, led by Betty Buckley and F. Murray Abraham, as a self-deluded sister and brother, bring them to

MADDALENA SISTO

full ripeness. Michael Mayer directed. (11/3/97) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—Canadian keyboardists Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt perform both classical and pop selections while recounting their years of musical training. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE:** Century, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 279-4200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **MERE MORTALS:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—The annual cycle of Christmas parties picks up steam. Performances of the traditional dance bash at Clara and Fritz's and its magical aftermath—better known as "The Nutcracker"—continue through Jan. 4. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Dec. 3-4 and Dec. 9 at 6, Dec. 5 at 8, Dec. 6 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 7 at 1 and 5.)

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre—Dec. 3 at 7: "Fin de Siècle" and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 8: "Polish Pieces," "Urban Folk Dance," "Cavalcade," and "Suite Otis." . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 8: "The Stack-Up," "Hymn," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 2: "Night Creature," "Cry," "Blues Suite," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 8: "The Stack-Up," "Vespers," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 3: "Fin de Siècle," "Cavalcade," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 7:30: "Night Creature," "Urban Folk Dance," "Vespers," and "The Stack-Up." . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 8: "Polish Pieces," "Cry," "Bad Blood," and "Revelations." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Dec. 31.)

"River"—Eiko and Koma (two performers, one MacArthur grant) bring an outdoor work—which, in its original version, ended with the couple floating off down the Delaware River—to an indoor pool at BAM's Majestic Theatre. Despite the change from stream to standing water, the same themes (surrender, silence, the passage of time, the effacement of life) continue to surface. The couple performs in various stages of immersion throughout, to the accompaniment of the Kronos Quartet, who perform onstage but remain dry. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Dec. 3-6 at 7:30 and Dec. 7 at 3.)

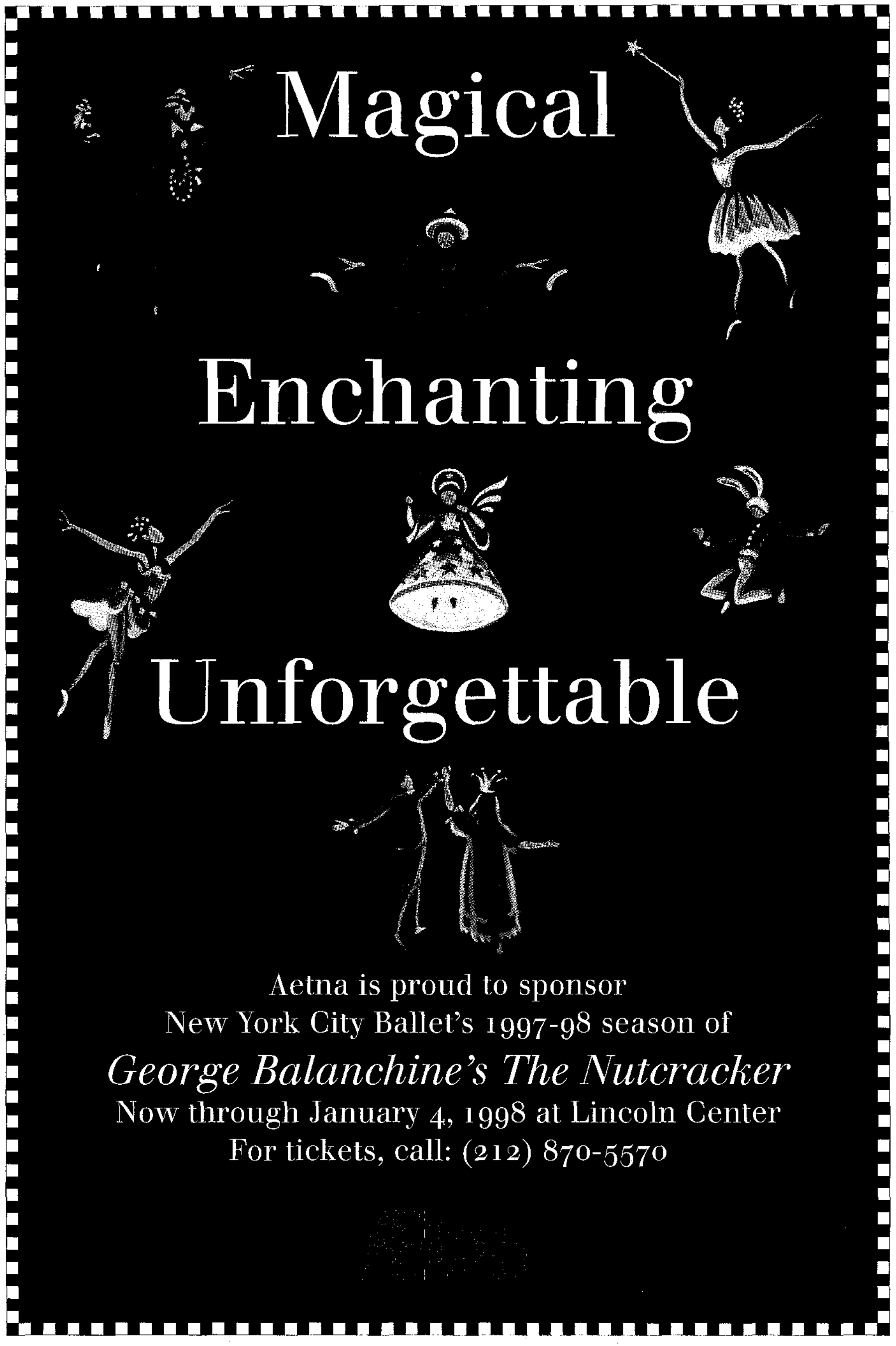
Murray Louis and Nikolais Dance—The ten-member company offers four programs in its two-week engagement, a couple featuring the choreography of Mr. Louis, one with pieces by the late Alwin Nikolais, and a fourth presenting work by both. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Dec. 2-5 and Dec. 9 at 8, Dec. 6 at 2 and 8, and Dec. 7 at 2. Through Dec. 14.)

Improvisation Festival/NY—The sixth such multi-venue adventure, curated by Julie Carr and Sondra Loring, offers all manner of spontaneous choreography over the upcoming fortnight, including classes, round-robin dance partnering, and improvised performances. Among this week's highlights: Douglas Dunn and Danny Lepkoff at the 92nd Street Y (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5555; Dec. 7 at 3) and three performance slates at Danspace Project—Dec. 4 at 8:30: Jeff Bliss, Irène Hultman, and Trotman & Morrish. . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 8:30: Ray Chung, David Finkelstein, Neil Greenberg, Clarinda Mac Low, Karen Sherman, and Kirstie Simson. . . . ¶ Dec. 7 at 8:30: Philip Hamilton, Stephanie Maher, and Karen Nelson & Lisa Nelson. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. For information about festival events, which continue through Dec. 14, call 718-832-5328.)

Dancers Responding to AIDS—The limber charity reconvenes its Remember Project in a new format: last year's twenty-four hours of dancing to Erik Satie has changed to this year's cavalcade of companies, with more than seventy-five appearing in twelve hours of performances. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie. Dec. 6, from noon to midnight. For schedule and ticket information, call 840-0770.)

Martha at Mother—Richard Move, in the guise of Martha Graham, provides dance-history lectures in a night-club setting with the help of a small ensemble. This month's lecture includes appearances by Dancenoise, Jaime Martinez, and Stuart Hodes and Alice Tierstein. (Mother, 875 Washington St., at 14th St. 366-5680. Dec. 3 at 8.)

"Coco-Grille"—Jonathan Appels and his six-member company perform a full-length work based on the Comtesse de La Fayette's "La Princesse de Clèves." (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 242-1664. Dec. 2-3 at 8 and a benefit performance on Dec. 4 at 7.)



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NIGHT LIFE

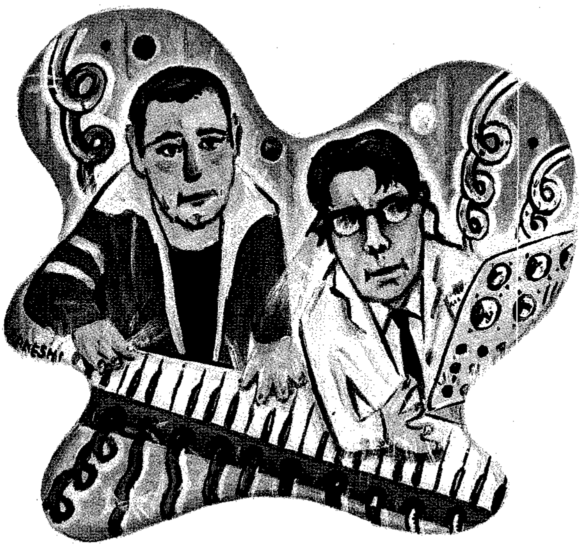
CONCERTS

"Cassandra Sings Miles"—Miles Davis used his horn to sing; Cassandra Wilson uses her voice as a horn. Offering retailored arrangements of some of Davis's favorite love songs, Wilson will pay tribute to the master interpreter while claiming a place as the premier interpreter of her day. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 3-6 at 8.)

Phillip Johnston and the Transparent Quartet—This unit may not be as boisterous as Johnston's late lamented Microscopic Septet, but his distinctive writing and exacting soprano-saxophone work still thrive in it. (Roulette, 228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Dec. 3 at 9.)

Reggie Workman / Myra Melford—It looked like history was going to assign Workman no more than an honorable mention, for his fine bass work in the sixties with Art Blakey and John Coltrane; but, as it turned out, his best years were still in front of him. A smart bandleader and composer who approaches the out-there impulses of the sixties with an appropriate seriousness, he has recently made a series of terrific inside/outside recordings that rope together such perennial upstarts as Andrew Hill, Paul Bley, and Sam Rivers. His own bands invariably balance punctiliousness with verve. / A pianist and composer who incorporates Cecil Taylor's sonic fauvism in her work, Melford can be a persuasive advocate for avant activity when her formal acumen keeps her tumultuous improvising in check. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 4 at 8.)

Portishead—This Bristol duo makes what might be described as purr pop. Geoff Barrow samples old spy-flick music, lush strings, and assorted blips and grinds, then adds reedy keyboards, rim shots, and sizzling cymbals; the gelid results play like a French film-noir soundtrack you can dance to. Over the mix, Beth Gibbons sings bittersweet love poems in a high, wispy voice that sounds as if she's about to weep. "Dummy," the band's 1994 début, ushered in the genre now known as trip-hop and became one of the most influential records of the decade. Its eponymous new record is equally crepuscular if less exciting, and it delves even deeper into cloak-and-dagger territory. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Dec. 5 at 9.)



The Crystal Method, at Irving Plaza.

Jim Staley and Phoebe Légère—Two downtown legends, the trombonist and the bombshell banshee, try out some new, highly improvised songs. (Roulette. Dec. 5 at 9.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**andrea marcovicci** has taken over the Oak Room through Jan. 3 with the songs of Mabel Mercer. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Dec. 4-6: The refined vocalist **freddy cole** used to sing an anthem of self-assertion, "I'm Not My Brother, I'm Me." Now, he's devoting an entire Christmas program to Nat King Cole. With a piano-bass-and-guitar lineup modelled after his brother's classic trio and a vocal style that can almost suggest a sibling visitation from the beyond, this gifted singer can be quite unforgettable himself. The redoubtable saxophonist **frank wess** is also on hand. **chico o'farrill's afro-cuban jazz orchestra** holds forth on Dec. 8. **david liebman** (Dec. 9-10) has tamed the beast. The recalcitrant soprano saxophone has been the saxophonist's standard double ever since Coltrane picked it up in 1961; Liebman is one of the handful of players brave enough to have made it his main horn. He has fashioned an uncommonly intelligent approach that avoids both the facileness and the modal banality which, in the hands of others, seem endemic to the instrument. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Vocalist **dianne reeves** is in through Dec. 7. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The sparkling **bobby short** presides in the Café Carlyle through Dec. 31. On Mondays, **woody allen** plays with the **eddy davis new orleans jazz band**. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **barbara carroll** has settled in for a stay that will take her through New Year's.

Danny's Skylight Room, 346 W. 46th St. (265-8133)—Cabaret crooner **bill young** is in on Dec. 4.

Don't Tell Mama, 341 W. 46th St. (757-0788)—On Mondays in December, when "Side Show" (in which he plays the Geek) is dark, **phillip officer** breezes in to sing holiday songs with some musical-theatre friends.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Dec. 7: **javon jackson** is no fool. With so many bright young tenor saxophonists around, he has ditched the conventional horn-and-rhythm setup on his most recent recordings and gone outré. Collaborating with Craig Street, the jazz producer of the minute, he experiments with both acoustic and rock-ish guitars, organ, and vocalists, tackling material by composers from Muddy Waters and Serge Gainsbourg to Tony Williams and Carlos Santana. Live, Jackson may not be able to replicate all the sonic high jinks of his disks, but his band is certain to keep things lively. Mondays belong to electric-guitar pioneer **les paul.** Dining.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Add **eric alexander** (through Dec. 7) to the list of terrific young tenorists who seem to be crawling all over the city lately. He has a hefty tone and the kind of energy known only to the ambitious, and his new band, One for All, should give him plenty of room to show off his wares.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Dec. 3-6: Guitarist **bucky pizzarelli,** to borrow a phrase from Irving Berlin, just reeks with class. This consummate craftsman can seduce with velvety chords or rumble through a swing chorus with barrelling assurance. With bassist **linc milliman** and pianist **russ kassoff.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—**harald haerter and dewey redman** are in on Dec. 3. Redman's son Joshua may be grabbing the spotlight, but he is quite the tenor saxophonist himself. Having apprenticed alongside Ornette Coleman, he isn't afraid of the outer limits, but he's just as likely to wrap his broad tone around a sturdy standard or a bebop jaunt. Haerter is a Swiss guitarist out of the John Scofield school. Bassist **mark dresser** and multi-reedman **vinny golia** play together on Dec. 9.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TAKESHI TADATSU

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Maxim's, 680 Madison Ave., at 61st St. (751-5111)—The graceful, unassuming **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY** is in on Dec. 5-6 with a Christmas show. Dining.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Through Dec. 6: "**LOUNGEVILLE, VOLUME I . . . MUSIC TO WATCH GIRLS BY.**" Starting Dec. 9: Sixties girl-group veteran **DARLENE LOVE.**

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—Alto saxophonist **MYRON WALDEN** (Dec. 4) is a young, rousing talent worth keeping an eye on. Dec. 5-6: The **EDDIE DIEHL** quartet. The **JASON LINDNER BIG BAND** holds court every Monday; the **LARRY GOLDINGS** trio has Tuesdays; and the **SAM YAHEL ORGAN QUARTET** is in each Wednesday.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Dec. 7: Saxophonist **GREG OSBY**, a renegade associated with M-Base, a subversive combo dedicated to thumbing its nose at the neo-con movement of the eighties, hasn't quite returned to the fold; let's just say he's reinvestigating the glories of the jazz tradition. With his probing edge intact, he remains one of the sharpest and least predictable alto players to have emerged in the past two decades. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—**JOE LOVANO** (through Dec. 7) has ants in his pants, and we all benefit from his affliction. The saxophone star thrives on change: each of his recordings examines a new context, while club engagements give him the chance to reconfigure his band and extend his musical vision. The promising edition débuting here includes pianist Kenny Werner, bassist Dennis Irwin, and drummer Yoron Israel, and they'll undoubtedly venture into uncharted waters. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

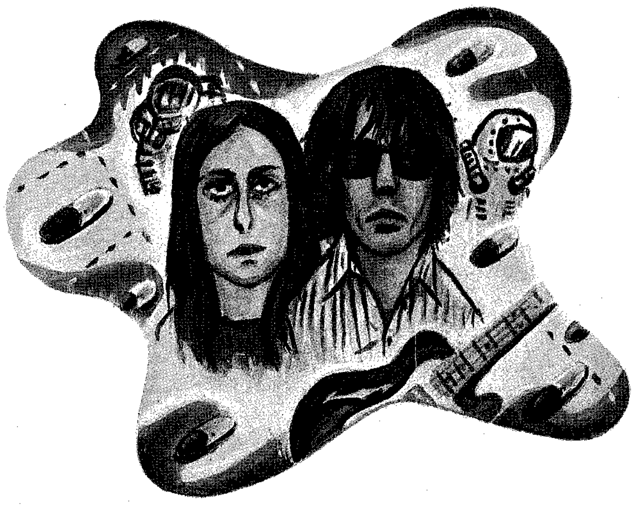
Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Dec. 9: Bassist **BEN WOLFE**, whose thump has been heard behind Harry Connick Jr., Wynton Marsalis, Marcus Roberts, and others, fronts his own band.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Dec. 6: Pianist **BILL MAYS**, a cultivated mainstreamer who has yet to play an inelegant phrase, and bassist **RAY DRUMMOND**, whose broad tone and daring interjections provide the spice.

ROCK, ETC.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—**BUSTER POINDEXTER AND HIS SPANISH ROCKETSHIP BAND** blast off on Dec. 3. "**REQUIRED LISTENING**" (Dec. 5) features former Replacements guitarist **SLIM DUNLAP**, topnotch singer-songwriter **KEVIN SALEM**, and others. Dec. 6: Often hailed as the world's greatest bar band, **NRBQ** can live up to the hype. There just isn't another outfit with such mastery of virtually every American popular-music idiom, from rockabilly and blues to jazz and swing. Dec. 9: **ED PALERMO** and his big band play the music of Frank Zappa.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Dec. 6: Former Television guitarist **RICHARD LLOYD**, with the Television-inspired indie crackle of **ANTIETAM**. Dec. 8: The Atlanta quartet **BIG FISH ENSEMBLE** makes quirky, folk-tinged rock.



Spiritualized, at Webster Hall.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Buddy Guy may be a better-known singer, but **OTIS RUSH** (Dec. 5-6) has been nipping at his ankles for more than four decades. Rush is nothing if not intense: his phrasing stings with a lyricism just this side of murderous, and his pledge "I've been wronged, but I won't be wronged again" is just as chilling.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Dec. 5: The excellent neo-folk duo **ONCE BLUE.** Dec. 9: Boston folkie **ELLIS PAUL** plays solo. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Dec. 4: Back before techno was repackaged as electronica to galvanize the record business, **MOBY**, a bald, vegetarian, Christian one-man band, was among its most compelling practitioners. Such early records as his "Everything Is Wrong" (1995) burst with a propulsive, limb-snapping sound that brought together ecstasy-addled club kids and StairMaster addicts. On his 1996 record, the underrated "Animal Rights," Moby made the nearly career-killing decision to go punk, just as the knob twirlers were catching up to him. Having survived, the man who has claimed to be Herman Melville's grandnephew (but isn't) is back with "I Like to Score," a collection of mostly instrumental film music, including his new version of the James Bond theme for the upcoming "Tomorrow Never Dies." With **JUNO REACTOR.** Dec. 5: **THE CRYSTAL METHOD.** This excellent Las Vegas techno collective isn't as cartoonish as Prodigy or as seasoned as Moby (see above), but it pushes all the right people-moving buttons. Queens natives and longtime hardcore heroes **SICK OF IT ALL** (Dec. 6) rock with maximum tilt. Dec. 10: The supremely talented but frequently overlooked heavy-duty English band **CATHERINE WHEEL.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—On Dec. 3, sound sculptor and turntable impresario **CHRISTIAN MARCLAY** plays, both solo and with art-noise guitar virtuoso **ELLIOTT SHARP.** Dec. 5-6: **THIRD RAIL**, a downtown supergroup that features bassist **BILL LASWELL**, keyboardists **BERNIE WORRELL** and **AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS**, guitarist **JAMES (BLOOD) ULMER**, and drummer **JEROME (BIGFOOT) BRAILEY.** With the **LAST POETS.** Dec. 7: Prague avant-rockers **UZ JSME DOMA** share a bill with their friends, New York avant-poppers **SKULPEY.** On Dec. 8, the clever, uncategorizable **JAZZ PASSENGERS** continue their monthlong Monday residency. They're joined by different guests each week. (Keep an eye out for their cohort Debbie Harry.)

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Dec. 4: **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS** continue their Thursday-night gig. Dec. 5-7: **MIDNIGHT OIL.** Some people want to fill the world with silly love songs, but these New Wave legends would rather sing about the exploitation of Aboriginal Australians. Led by the huge, bald, and glowering Peter Garrett, they offer four-minute discourses that you can bang your head to. Their political intensity seems newly relevant given the popularity of radical bands like Rage Against the Machine, and they have a back catalogue strong enough to make a live set seem like a greatest-hits package. Dec. 8: Top-shelf roots rock with the **JAYHAWKS.**

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—One of the best English bands you've never heard of, **SPIRITUALIZED** (Dec. 3) specializes in neo-psychedelic dream pop and brilliant packaging. (A limited edition of its latest disk, "Ladies and Gentleman We Are Floating in Space . . . ," came in aluminum-foil pharmaceutical wrapping; you pushed out the CD like a giant pill.) Live, the band channels Syd Barrett-style solipsism with airy hooks and angel-food ear candy.

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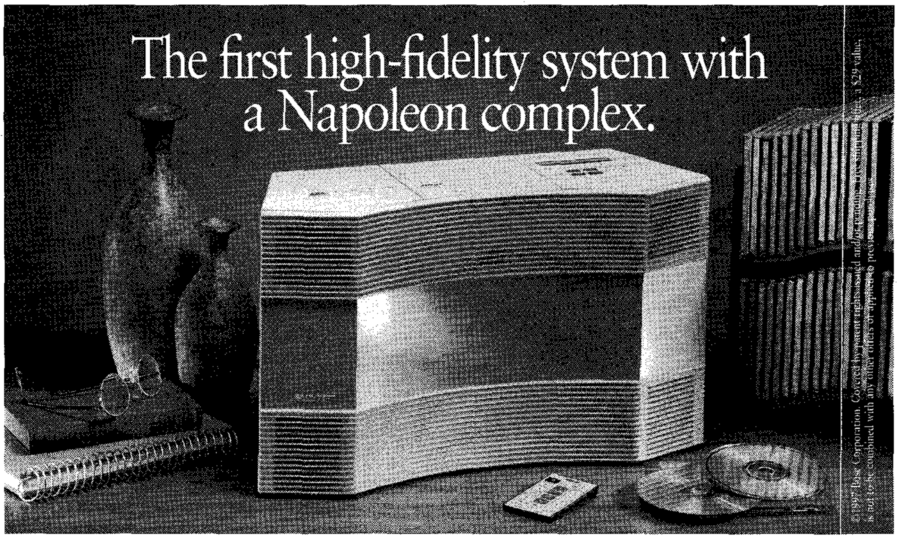

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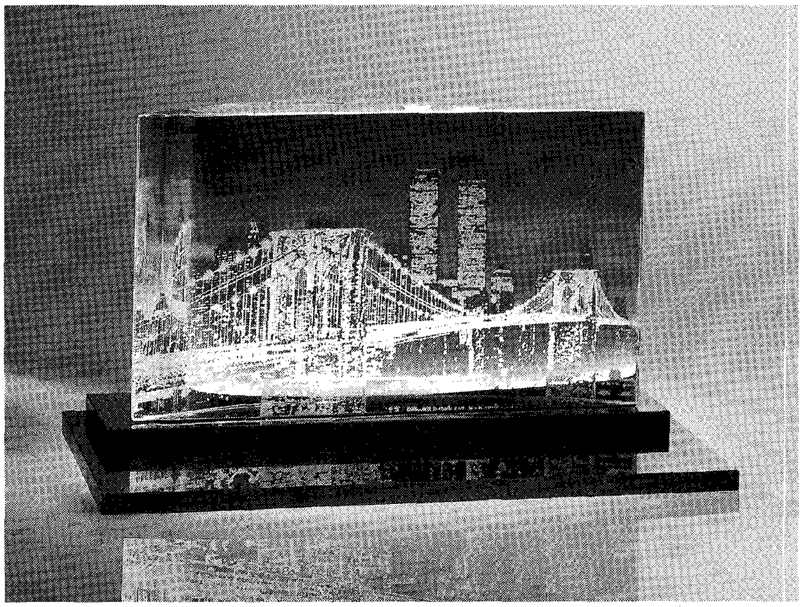

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ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"The Private Collection of Edgar Degas." Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Drawings of Filippino Lippi and His Circle." Through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "Jackson Pollock: Early Sketchbooks and Drawings." Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-92)." Thirty-odd paintings by the late Abstract Expressionist. (See also the Photography Short List.) Through Feb. 22. . . . ¶ "King of the World: A Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle" and "Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era," two exhibitions celebrating Indian art. Through Feb. 8 and March 1, respectively. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Egon Schiele: The Leopold Collection, Vienna." (See also Galleries—Uptown, Short List.) Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "On the Edge: Contemporary Art from the Werner and Elaine Dannheisser Collection." Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ "Deadpan," a video installation by Steve McQueen, in the Project Room. Through Feb. 10. . . . ¶ "Achille Castiglioni: Design!" Cutlery, spotlights, floor lamps, tractor seats, and other graceful items from the witty Italian designer. Through Jan. 6. . . . ¶ "Mexican Video: Thorn of the Mountain," an exhibition of independent videos by *montañeros*, campesinos, and citizens of Mexico City. Through Dec. 7. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Robert Rauschenberg: A Retrospective" offers more than four hundred pieces from nearly half a century of work. At both Guggenheim venues, through Jan. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—The museum's Rauschenberg retrospective continues here. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

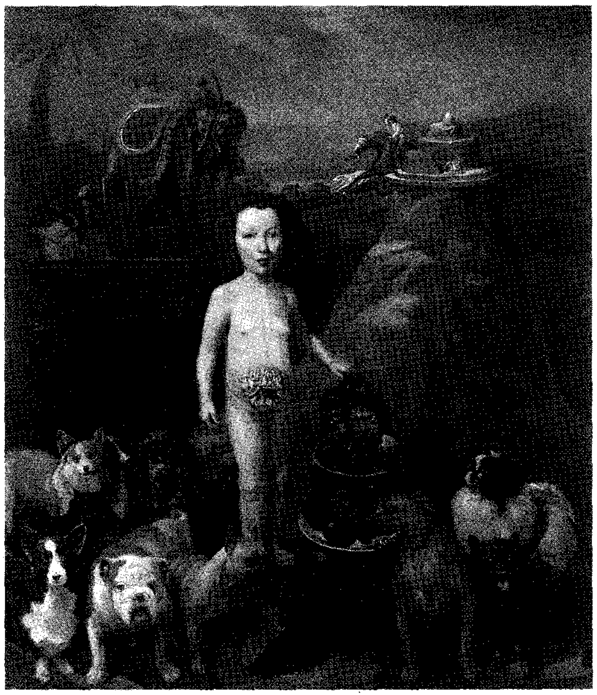
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The Richard Diebenkorn retrospective, through Jan. 11. . . . ¶ "The Warhol Look/Glamour Style Fashion." Through Jan. 18. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Nature of Diamonds" looks at many facets of the adamantine stone, from its birth in volcanic fissures to its eventual rise to the heads of heads of state (e.g., on the crown of Peter the Great, displayed in the exhibition's walk-in diamond vault). Through April 26. . . . ¶ "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897-1902." Through March 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Monet and the Mediterranean" is an exquisite exhibition that shows the artist both on the brink of discovering the "serial procedure" that would become his signature and after having mastered it. The gardens and seascapes of Antibes radiate a delightful freshness; the opulence of the paintings of the Doge's Palace and the Palazzo Dario aflame in dying light is dazzling. Through Jan. 4. . . . ¶ "The Furniture of George Hunzinger: Invention and Innovation in Nineteenth Century America." Through Feb. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 10 to 9; and Sundays, 10 to 7.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535)—"Four Acts in Glass" fills all available galleries with installations by Dale Chihuly, William Morris, Pike Powers, and Bertil Vallien. Through Jan. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—"Design for Life: A Centennial Celebration," comprising selec-



"Self-Portrait as Rare Breed," by Julie Heffernan (Littlejohn).

tions from the treasure trove the museum has amassed over the past hundred years, sets out to demonstrate ways in which design permeates every aspect of our existence and expresses who and what we are. The show is a kind of flea-market paradise: you can find everything from a nineteenth-century chatelaine (attached to which are a sewing kit, a pair of eyeglasses, and a scent case) to a 1922 Soviet chess set called the Reds and the Whites (the white pawn is a sorrowful worker bound in chains, the red king a dignified proletarian) to Donald Deskey's charming 1940 design for the Sportshack, a prefabricated weekend cabin. Through Jan. 4. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"Assignment: Rescue, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee," an exhibition devoted to the efforts of an editor at the Foreign Policy Association, in New York, who saved some two thousand artists, intellectuals, and political refugees—including Marc Chagall, André Breton, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Lipchitz—whose lives were endangered by the "surrender on demand" clause in a treaty between Vichy France and Germany. Through March 29. . . . ¶ "Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits in Colonial and Federal America." Through Jan. 11. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (534-1672)—"Under the Big Top: Circuses in New York." Posters, costumes, photographs, circus toys, scale models, stuffed Bengal tigers, and historical notes, such as one about the contributions of the Frenchman Jules Leotard, inventor of the flying trapeze and of the form-fitting bodysuit that bears his name. Through Feb. 22. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

MILTON AVERY (1885-1965)—Paintings and works on paper, mostly from the forties and fifties. Avery has often been characterized as the American Matisse, and, while he lacks the inventiveness and verve of the French master, his brilliant palette and his penchant for *bonheur de vivre* subject matter justify the comparison. Through Dec. 6. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111.)

PIERRE BONNARD (1867-1947) / **ELIE NADELMAN** (1882-1946)—On one floor, a small, transporting exhibition of luscious Bonnard landscapes, which sometimes venture into the realm of abstraction; many of them, such as "L'Automne, Arbre Rouge," rendered in the rich colors of the Fauvists, reflect a deeply satisfying joy in the natural world. Upstairs, a selection of Nadelman's beautiful early sculptures in wood, marble, and bronze. "I employ no other line than the curve, which possesses freshness and force," Nadelman said (accurately). Most of the pieces are "ideal" classical heads and voluptuous nudes; there is also an exquisite bronze horse prancing on perfect little legs. Both shows through Dec. 13. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays.)

JULIE HEFFERNAN—Self-portraits and still-lifes, whose convincing stylistic nods (e.g., to the infantas of Velázquez and the landscapes of Fantin-Latour) are lightened by paintings within paintings: mini dreamscapes (elephants disappearing down a hole in a McDonald's parking lot) and noirish film scenes in alternate palettes. Despite the flea-market assortment of styles, there's none of the ironic dissociation of David Salle here: Heffernan's panels are fizzy and theatrical, and her layers of blatant artifice somehow add up to a single dreamy narrative. Through Dec. 17. (Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323.)

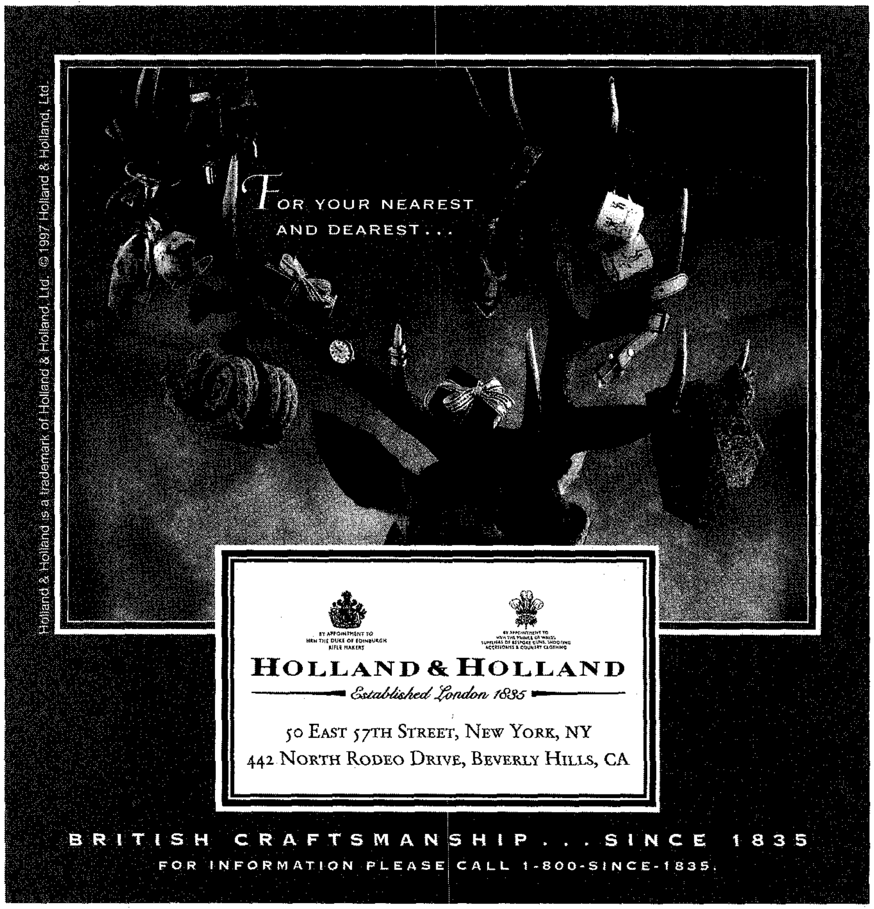
NICOLAS DE STAËL (1914-55)—Late paintings and works on paper by a French artist (actually, a Russian emigré orphan transplanted to France) who worked in both abstract and representational styles. Many of the pictures are characterized by thickly painted, clotted surfaces. (He certainly knew how to use a palette knife.) They are also suffused with dreariness. Through Dec. 13. (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400.)

"THE ARTIST'S WORLD"—A gallimaufry of paintings about artists, their families, their studios, their masked balls and rendezvous, their sun-dappled sheds, and so on. With examples by Courbet, Ingres, Fairfield Porter, Diebenkorn, and many others. Through Jan. 3. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810.)

"MAN RAY: AN AMERICAN SURREALIST VISION"—Paintings, drawings, photographs, films, and sculptures by one of the most consistently intriguing artists in the orbit of international Surrealism. The curator, Francis M. Naumann, has managed to get a number of masterpieces, including the photograph "Le Violon d'Ingres" (1924), featuring Ray's mistress, the demimondaine Kiki de Montparnasse. This exhibition doesn't stint on Ray's paintings, which aren't nearly as well known as his photographs and sculptures. Most of them have a certain dry clumsiness that, in fact, contributes to their charm. Through Dec. 20. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124.)

"SARGENT ABROAD"—The title of this excellent exhibition is subtly misleading: after all, wasn't John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), like Henry James, famously abroad? Most of the pictures here are intimately scaled landscapes and figural studies, not the grandiose portraits of the rich and powerful for which the artist became renowned. Connoisseurs of fin-de-siècle froth will discover many treasures. Through Dec. 13. (Adelson, 25 E. 77th St. 439-6800.)

SHORT LIST—**GREGORY BARSAMIAN,** Schmidt-Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through Dec. 23. . . . **FRANZ KLINE,** Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 988-6870.



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Through Jan. 17. . . . **SOL LE WITT**, Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through Jan. 3. . . . **GEORGE LUKS**, Owen, 19 E. 75th St. 879-2415. Through Dec. 15. . . . **JAVIER MARIN**, Haime, 41 E. 57th St. 888-3550. Open Mondays; through Dec. 23. . . . **DOUGLAS OSA**, Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through Dec. 30. . . . **EGON SCHIELE**, Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through Jan. 3. . . . **CY TWOMBLY**, Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313. Through Dec. 20. . . . **ROBERT WEINSTOCK**, Giampietro, 25 E. 73rd St. 861-8571. Through Dec. 6. . . . **ANDREW WYETH**, David Findlay, Jr., 41 E. 57th St. 486-7660. Through Jan. 3.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller—"Dark Pool," a dim and disorderly installation intended to conjure nostalgia for mad science, *instead feels like you're stumbling into a* fleabag hotel. Snatches of dialogue and music triggered by movement add a mildly Proustian effect. Through Jan. 3. (Morris-Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

Robert Longo—After wrapping "Johnny Mnemonic," the artist turned movie director *took on a yearlong drawing-a-day project.* The resulting three hundred and sixty-six images (1996 was a leap year) demonstrate an impressive range of photorealist effects. Unfortunately, they're lavished mostly on an all-too-familiar take on media saturation (the Munich Olympics, Janis Joplin, a burning cross, Tiger Woods). Through Jan. 10. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

Bill Traylor (1854-1947)—Works on cardboard by the African-American folk artist, an illiterate ex-slave who didn't begin painting until he was eighty-four. The combination of blunt construction, bold composition, energetic geometry, and mute drama give these panels an eloquence that is transcendently lacking in irony. It also makes them hard to pigeonhole and turns them into a somewhat disconcerting stop on a stroll through Chelsea—which is the reason to go. Through Dec. 24. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

Short List—**MATTHEW BARNEY**, Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300. Through Dec. 20. . . . **OLIVER HERRING**, Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through Dec. 6. . . . **JOAN MITCHELL AND JOHN CHAMBERLAIN**, Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through Jan. 9. . . . **KEHNET NIELSEN**, DCA Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-5511. Through Dec. 20. . . . **ARLENE RUSH**, Asyl, 547 W. 27th St. 594-1372. Through Dec. 13. . . . **SARA SOSNOWY** and **KIM JONES**, Weber, 529 W. 20th St. 691-5711. Both shows through Dec. 20. . . . **ERIC WOLF**, Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through Dec. 24.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Beatriz Milhazes—Striking oils with seductive contradictions. Decorative elements (roses, beadwork, crockery patterns, ribbon-edged hearts) cross the canvas with the boldness of a big, black Franz Kline stroke. Bright and unexpected colors (profound pinks, bursts of Day-Glo, concentric metallic shades) are layered or juxtaposed until they achieve placidity or the settled allure of age. Through Jan. 10. (Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880.)

Richard Serra—New "drawings," made with melted black oil stick (quantities of it) applied to paper with a mesh utensil and sometimes stepped on by the artist to achieve the right density and texture. The show is entitled "Rounds," and each of the eighteen pictures features a large, almost three-dimensional circular or elliptical mass, variously positioned within a rectangular frame. All have titles ("Paul Celan," "Robert Frank," "Walkin the Dog"), adding a playfully absurdist element to the work. Through Dec. 20. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

Christopher Wool—Elegant new paintings, most of them in enamel on aluminum. These cool, mysterious, and rarefied pictures are very much about process, and Wool continues his exploration of the tension between painting and mechanical reproduction. In one picture, black stencil designs recalling the banality of gift wrap or flocked wallpaper have been applied to a slippery white surface; next to it, a similar painting has been whitewashed over with a roller, leaving a palimpsest of original intent. Also on view: three works on rice paper which add a new delicacy to the artist's vocabulary. Through Dec. 20. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. 219-9600.)

Short List—**BRYAN CROCKETT**, Fotouhi Cramer, 560 Broadway. 431-1304. Through Jan. 3. . . . **GRAHAM DURWARD**, Boesky, 51 Greene St. 941-9888. Through Dec. 20. . . . **SYLVIE FLEURY**, Postmasters, 80 Greene St. 941-5711. Through Dec. 20. . . . **CHARLES GOLDMAN**, Correct, 109 Ludlow St. 979-7071. Closed Tuesdays, opens at noon; through Jan. 17. . . . **PAULA HAYES**, A/C Project Room, 15 Renwick St. 219-8275. Through Jan. 17. . . . **YVES KLEIN**, A/D, 560 Broadway. 966-5154. Through Jan. 10. . . . **TOM KNECHTEL**, P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Through Dec. 20. . . . **JENNIFER MONICK**, First New York: Staff Gallery, 495 Broadway. 925-9700. Through Jan. 17. . . . **MARTIN MULL**, Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through Dec. 20. . . . **WILLIAM NICHOLS**, O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. 431-3600. Through Jan. 3. . . . **OLLY & SUZI**, Davies, 23 Commerce St. 243-6840. Through Dec. 13. . . . **CARL PALAZZOLO**, Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through Dec. 20. . . . **SUSAN ROTHENBERG**, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through Dec. 13. . . . **JULIAN SCHNABEL**, Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through Dec. 13. . . . **JOSEPH SCHNEIDER**, Trans Hudson, 416 W. 13th St. 242-3232. Through Dec. 20. . . . **SHAHZIA SIKANDER**, Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through Dec. 20.

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AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Dec. 3: Sporting art, including important works by Stubbs and Munnings. . . . ¶ Dec. 4: American paintings, drawings, and sculptures, with works by Homer, Cassatt, Ritman, and Miller. . . . ¶ Dec. 5: Printed books and manuscripts, including a holograph of Clement Clarke Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas," many early Presidential items, and (at the other end of the spectrum) the only letter on record from John Wilkes Booth to the owner of Ford's Theatre, confirming an acting engagement in 1863. . . . ¶ Dec. 5-6: Fine and collectible wines, especially rich in top-vintage Bordeaux (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . At **christie's east:** Dec. 9: Moderately priced jewelry (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

"Isaac in Queen Anne's Lace," by Larry Towell (Leica).

Sotheby's—Dec. 3: American paintings, drawings, and sculptures, including six canvases by Sargent; also, a single-owner sale of twenty-one drawings by Bill Traylor (see also Galleries—Chelsea). . . . ¶ Dec. 4: Native American art. . . . ¶ Dec. 5: Russian art. . . . ¶ Dec. 6: Decorative pieces in Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles. . . . ¶ Dec. 8-9: Jewelry. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Doyle—Dec. 3: Estate jewelry. . . . ¶ Dec. 4: American and Latin-American paintings and sculptures. . . . ¶ Dec. 5: Books, autographs, and photographs, including an archive of material relating to Thomas Edison's search for a rubber substitute. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

Phillips—A sale of antique and modern jewelry and watches. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. Dec. 4-5.)

Swann—An auction of maps, atlases, and decorative graphics. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Dec. 4.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Larry Towell—The well-travelled photojournalist's black-and-white "Family Album" is a paean to home, in this case a seventy-five-acre farm in Ontario. Most of the images of kids, kittens, the swimming hole, and the front porch feel just right, if a bit safe. But one, "Black Locust Trees," shines brighter than the rest. Setting directly behind a dead, hollow tree, the weak sun illuminates a field and a dusty road; a girl reaches from inside the tree, beckoning to her cat to join her. Through Dec. 13. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

"Monk's World"—A well-worth-it group show for jazz lovers: forty black-and-white pictures of the legendary pianist and composer Thelonious Monk, alone and with such luminaries as Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, and Gerry Mulligan. Portraits of Coleman Hawkins, James P. Johnson, and Duke Ellington are also on view. The photographers include William Claxton, William Gottlieb, Herb Snitzer, and Lee Tanner. Through Jan. 11. (The Jazz Gallery, 290 Hudson St., at Spring St. 242-1063. Opens at 1; open Sundays.)

"Paris, City of Light"—The city as muse, in the photographs of Todd Webb, Bruce Cratsley, and André Kertész. Through Jan. 3. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

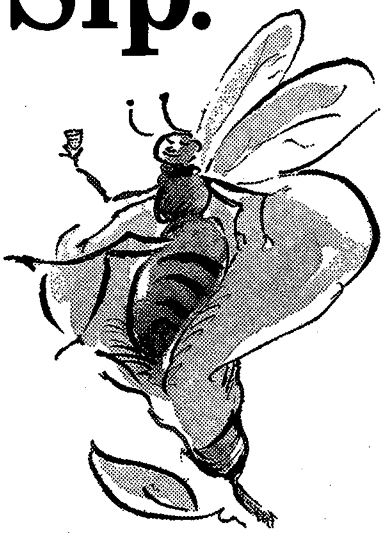
"Scene from Behind"—A playful group of images that, in one way or another, depict a posterior view. Among the artists are Helen Levitt, Lauren Greenfield, Louis Faurer, Lee Friedlander, and Leon Levinstein. Through Jan. 10. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Open Sundays, noon to 5.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Weegee's World: Life, Death and the Human Drama," a two-hundred-picture exhibition that spans the tabloid photographer's career. Through Feb. 22. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**max aguilera-hellweg,** Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6; through Dec. 6. . . . **tom baril,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Dec. 6. . . . **erwin blumenfeld** and **andré kertész,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. 226-0056. Both shows through Dec. 6. . . . **františek drtikol** and **richard gere,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Both shows through Dec. 6. . . . **lee friedlander,** Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through Dec. 31. . . . **andreas gursky,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Dec. 24. . . . **imre kinszki,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Dec. 6. . . . **builder levy,** Klapper Hall, Queens College, Kissena Blvd. and Melbourne Ave., Flushing. 718-997-4747. Through Dec. 19. . . . **danny lyon,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Jan. 18. . . . **john monteith,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through Dec. 24. . . . **richard pousette-dart,** Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223. Through Dec. 20. . . . **susan rankaitis,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through Dec. 13. . . . **fred stein** and **peter loewy,** Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Both shows through Jan. 3. . . . **kunié sugiura,** Tonkonow, 601 W. 26th St. 255-8450. Through Jan. 10. . . . **shellburne thurber,** Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Through Dec. 20. . . . **nick waplington,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through Dec. 20.

(See the museum listings for a photography exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History.)

Sip.



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CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall is 247-7800, and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC

Voices of Ascension Chorus and Orchestra—Dennis Keene directs Handel's "Messiah." (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. Dec. 3 at 8.)

Tallis Scholars—Peter Phillips leads the ten singers in two Christmas programs at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola. Dec. 4 at 8: Clemens non Papa's "Pastores quidnam vidistis" Mass and sacred works by Obrecht, Willaert, and Lassus.... ¶ Dec. 9 at 8: Tallis's "Puer natus est nobis" Mass and pieces by John Sheppard, Philippe Verdelot, Gombert, Byrd, and Taverner. (Park Ave. at 84th St. For information about tickets, call 800-627-0655.)

Chanticleer—The Bay Area men's vocal ensemble presents five go-rounds of its holiday program. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Dec. 6 at 7 and 9:30. For information about tickets, call 721-6500.... ¶ Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 7 at 6:30 and 8:30.... ¶ Grace Church, Broadway at 10th St. Dec. 8 at 8. For information about tickets, call 721-6500.)

Choral Symphony Society and Cantata Singers—David Labovitz leads all six cantatas of Bach's "Christmas Oratorio." (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Dec. 7 at 3. Admission by contribution.)

'Tis the Season—Here are several other groups offering widely varied holiday programs. **RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK.** (St. James Chapel, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Dec. 4 at 8. Admission by contribution.)... **NEW YORK TREBLE SINGERS.** (Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. Dec. 5 at 7:30. Admission by contribution.)... **NEW YORK POPS, WITH THE BOYS CHOIR OF HARLEM.** (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 5-6 at 8.)... **NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS.** (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Central Park W. at 64th St. Dec. 5 at 8 and Dec. 7 at 4. Tickets at the door.)... **STONEWALL CHORALE.** (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Dec. 6 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 971-5813.)... **HINDS SISTERS TRIO.** (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Dec. 7 at 3.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**LA CLEMENZA DI TITO,** with Carol Vaness, Heidi Grant Murphy, Anne Sofie von Otter, Angelika Kirchschlager, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, and John Cheek; conducted by James Levine. (Dec. 3 at 8 and Dec. 6 at 1:30.)... **THE RAKE'S PROGRESS,** by Stravinsky, with Joyce Guyer, Denyce Graves, Jerry Hadley, and Samuel Ramey; Mr. Levine. (Dec. 4 at 8.)... With Dawn Upshaw instead of Ms. Guyer. (Dec. 6 at 8:30.)... **TURANDOT,** with Sharon Sweet, Ruth Ann Swenson, Richard Margison, and Hao Jiang Tian; Nello Santi. (Dec. 5 at 8.)... **DON CARLO,** with Marina Mescheriakova, Dolora Zajick, Luis Lima, Thomas Hampson, James Morris, and Vladimir Ognovenko; Myung Whun Chung. (Dec. 8 at 7.)... **DON GIOVANNI,** with Carolyn James, Christine Goerke, Maria Bayo, Paul Groves, Dwayne Croft, and Ildebrando D'Arcangelo; Daniel Beckwith. (Dec. 9 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

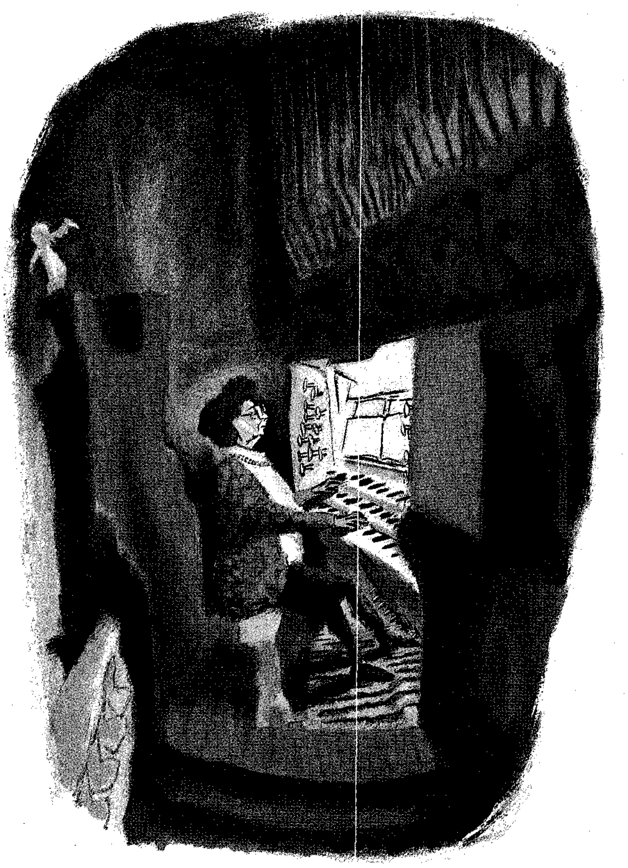
ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts the orchestra and the Westminster Symphonic Choir in Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah," with bass-baritone Bryn Terfel in the title role. Other soloists include soprano Kelley Nassief, mezzo-soprano Jard van Nes, and tenor John Mark Ainsley. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 4 and Dec. 6 at 8, and Dec. 9 at 7:30.)

London Symphony Orchestra—Colin Davis leads works by Sibelius, at Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 5 at 8: The composer's Symphonies No. 4 and No. 7, as well as five orchestrated songs (featuring soprano Katarina Dalayman).... ¶ Dec. 7 at 3: The symphonic legend "Lemminkäinen's Return," plus the Symphonies No. 3 and No. 5.... ¶ Dec. 8 at 7:30: The symphonic legend "The Swan of Tuonela," the Violin Concerto (with Kyoko Takezawa), and the Symphony No. 2.... **NOTE:** Ancillary events include a symposium in Lincoln Center's Kaplan Penthouse (on Dec. 6 at 10 A.M.; for information, call 875-5135) and an hour-long all-Sibelius recital by the Lark String Quartet in the Walter Reade Theatre (on Dec. 7 at 11 A.M.). For ticket information on all concerts, call 721-6500.

Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra—Robert Spano conducts Messiaen's "Trois Petites Liturgies" and "Oiseaux Exotiques" (both featuring pianist Wu Han), as well as Pärt's "Psalom" and Te Deum (with the New York Virtuoso Singers). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Dec. 5-6 at 8.)

American Composers Orchestra—Lou Harrison's "Symphony on G" opens a program that also includes Betsy Jolas's "Frauenleben" and premières of pieces by Sebastian Currier and Robert Ashley. Dennis Russell Davies conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 7 at 3.)



Marie-Claire Alain, at the Church of the Holy Trinity.

BLITCH

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble offers a suite from Handel's "Water Music," Elizabeth Brown's "Lost Waltz," and Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 271, with Charles Rosen). (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 870-6784. Dec. 7 at 3.)

I Musici—The Roman string orchestra performs Corelli's "Christmas" Concerto, Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" (with violinist Mariana Sirbu), and works by Tartini and Alessandro Rolla. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 8 at 7:30.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—André Previn conducts an all-Beethoven program, comprising the "Creatures of Prometheus" Overture, the Violin Concerto (with Kyung-Wha Chung), and the Symphony No. 7. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 9 at 8.)

RECITALS

Yefim Bronfman—The pianist performs Brahms's F-Minor Sonata, Rodion Shchedrin's Sonata, and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 3 at 7:30.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—An all-Bach concert, comprising the E-Major Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord, the D-Minor Concerto for Two Violins, and the Orchestral Suites No. 1 and No. 2 (the latter featuring flutist Elizabeth Mann). (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 3 at 8.)

Festival Chamber Music Society—The group performs a Vivaldi trio sonata; Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp; and Smetana's G-Minor Piano Trio. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 3 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Mark Peskanov and pianist Paul Ostrovsky perform Beethoven's Sonatas in A Major (Op. 30, No. 1), C Minor (Op. 30, No. 2), and G Major (Op. 96). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Dec. 4 at 7:30 and Dec. 7 at 4.)

André Watts—The pianist presents an all-Schubert recital that includes the "Wanderer" Fantasy and the G-Major Sonata (D. 894). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Dec. 6 at 8.)

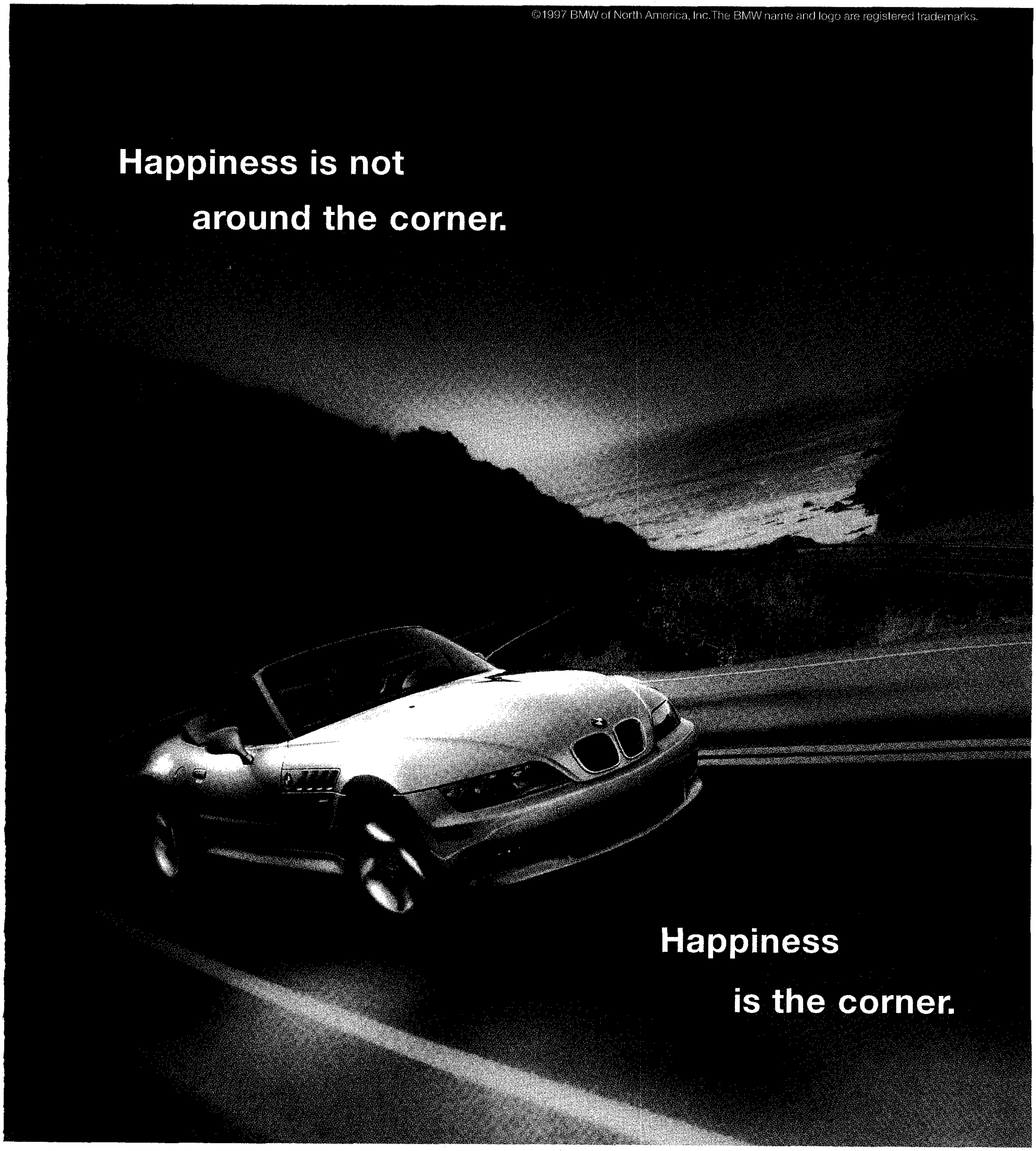
Angelika Kirchschlager—The Austrian mezzo-soprano offers songs by Schubert, Berg, two Mahlers (Gustav and Alma), Korngold, and Strauss. Pianist Helmut Deutsch assists. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 7 at 2.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra play Philippe Gaubert's "Trois Aquarelles" (for flute, cello, and piano), Rebecca Clarke's Duo for Viola and Cello, Schubert's B-Flat-Major String Trio (the short one, D. 471), and Brahms's Clarinet Trio. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 7 at 3.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting works for two, three, and two-times-three strings: Kodály's Duo for Violin and Cello, Dvořák's Terzetto for Two Violins and Viola, and Brahms's Sextet No. 1. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 7 at 5 and Dec. 9 at 7:30.)

Da Camera of Houston—The chamber ensemble offers a multimedia presentation exploring ways that the poetry of Baudelaire inspired Wagner, Debussy, and others. (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center. Dec. 8 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Marie-Claire Alain—No living organist has made a greater impact than this doyenne of the organ loft. In the nearly fifty years since she began her concert career, she has performed more than two thousand recitals around the world; that's a lot for organists, almost all of whom (including Ms. Alain) hold down church jobs. What's more, she has served as the high-spirited teacher and mentor to a generation or two of performers, has articulately advocated the use of musicological research as an aid to interpretation, has made more than three hundred recordings (including the complete organ works of Bach, three times through), and has been an indefatigable champion of the music of her brother Jehan (who was killed in the Second World War). In this recital, her only New York appearance this season, she performs a passel of Bach—his Prelude and Fugue in C Major (BWV 547), three of his chorale preludes, and his Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor—in addition to a Noël by Louis-Claude Daquin, Saint-Saëns's Rhapsody No. 3 ("Sur des Cantiques Bretons"), Jehan Alain's "Deux Danses à Agni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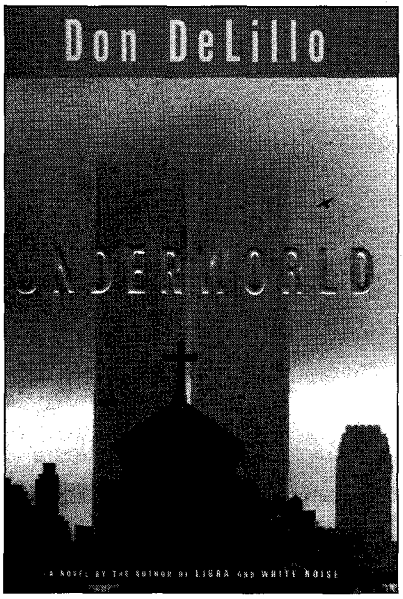

Don DeLillo, author of *White Noise* and *Libra*, has won numerous awards including the Pen/Faulkner and the National Book Award. Meet him when he reads from his long-awaited new novel *Underworld*, a fascinating look at postwar American culture. DeLillo reveals the country's preoccupations, fears and loves through a story about a man and woman who had a brief affair. A limited number of pre-autographed copies of *Underworld* will be available.

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Yavishta'' and ''Suite pour Orgue,'' and Franck's ''Choral No. 3.'' (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. Dec. 8 at 8.)

YO-YO MA—Several colleagues, including the guitarists Sergio and Odair Assad, join the cellist for an evening of tangos by Piazzolla. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. Dec. 9 at 7:30 and 9:30. For information about tickets, call 721-6500. . . . **NOTE:** Those who assume, not unreasonably, that the concert will take place in a night-club environment should be forewarned that the venue is to be reconfigured into a four-hundred-and-seventy-seat concert hall for the evening.)

CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE Y—The Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio plays Schubert's Piano Trio in B-Flat Major, and colleagues join them for Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Quartet and Schumann's Piano Quintet. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 9-10 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

CYGNUS ENSEMBLE: Electroacoustic pieces by Davidovsky, Nancarrow, and others. (St. Ignatius Episcopal Church, West End Ave. at 87th St. Dec. 3 at 8. Tickets at the door.) . . . **ALARIA CHAMBER ENSEMBLE:** With cellist Nathaniel Rosen. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.) . . . **JOSEF SUK:** Violin works by Grieg and Dvořák. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 7 at 3.) . . . **JUPITER SYMPHONY:** Jens Nygaard conducting, with violinist Charles Castleman, pianist William Wolfram, and tenor Larry Woodard. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Dec. 8 at 2 and 7, and Dec. 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.) . . . **ALL-BERNSTEIN:** Soprano Harolyn Blackwell, clarinettist Stanley Drucker, and others, in a musical adjunct to an upcoming auction of Bernstein memorabilia. (Sotheby's, York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7337. Dec. 8 at 6:30. A benefit concert.) . . . **SEQUITUR:** Ligeti's String Quartet No. 1 and a Martin Bresnick première, among other works. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 8 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

LEAVING LAKE WOBEGON—Each December, Garrison Keillor, the host of the weekly live radio show ''A Prairie Home Companion,'' decamps from the Fitzgerald Theatre in Saint Paul, Minnesota, for a brief engagement in New York. ''We like the big city,'' says the native Midwesterner, whose opening show, on Dec. 6 at 5:45, features bluesman John Hammond, bass-baritone Bryn Terfel, and author Frank McCourt. ''We like doing the show on West Forty-third—a street A. J. Liebling walked—and we especially like the audience that comes to see it, a forthright bunch.'' (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Additional shows on Dec. 13 and Dec. 20.)

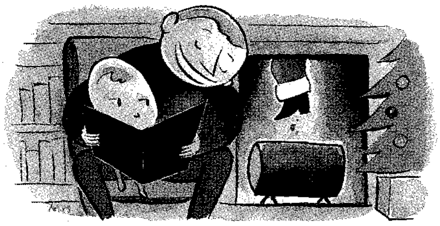
READINGS—Dec. 4 at 7: By John Berendt, A. M. Homes, Patrick McGrath, and other novelists, from crime novels published in the thirties through the fifties. (International Center for Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777, ext. 156.) . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 8: By Charles Simic, from his poetry. (Stella Adler Conservatory, 419 Lafayette St. 260-0525.) . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 7:30: By Nin Andrews and Tom Disch, from their poetry. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 9 at 7: By novelist William Styron. (Queens College, Kissena Blvd. and Melbourne Ave., Flushing. 718-997-4646.)

TALKS—Dec. 4 at 6: Writer Susan Sontag interviews the Hungarian novelist Péter Nádas (''A Book of Memories''). (PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, at Prince St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 8: Melvin Jules Bukiet, Rebecca Goldstein, Jonathan Rosen, and other Jewish-American novelists exchange views on contemporary Jewish-American literature. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488.) . . . ¶ Dec. 8 at 7: Jazz historian Dan Morganstern moderates a discussion on the state of jazz today, with writers Eric Nisenson (''Round About Midnight'') and Tom Piazza (''Blues Up and Down: Jazz in Our Time''). (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Good Tidings

LIKE a child composing his annual list for Santa, when it comes to Christmas stories, the children's book author and illustrator William Joyce (''The Leaf Men and the Brave Good Bugs,'' ''A Day with Wilbur Robinson'') knows exactly what he wants. For Joyce, a Yuletide tale ''should have food in it, should have snow in it, and it should have gatherings of people, relatives that you don't like, relatives that you do like, and people that you otherwise would never have met.'' An element of adventure doesn't hurt, either, and there should be a holiday ''toasty factor of 10.'' You can find all these ingredients in the author's **SANTA CALLS** (HarperCollins), a Christmas story that Jules Verne and Gene Autry might have come up with together.



MARCELLUS HALL

Joyce finds his requirements satisfied by Dickens's **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**, but he feels that for Scrooge tales, Dr. Seuss's **HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS** (Random House) is the one story in which ''there's a change of heart that works.'' He's also fond of Beatrix Potter's **THE TAILOR OF GLOUCESTER** (Frederick Warne), in which some sartorially talented mice come to the aid of a tailor who's been taken ill before finishing an order from a ''highfalutin Londoner. There's snow in it, the mice have a great banquet, they do a good deed, and there's hearths aplenty.''

A native Louisianan, Joyce is right at home with the Southern feel of **A CHRISTMAS MEMORY** (Random House), by Truman Capote. ''The way he evokes Christmas still smacks a little bit of Halloween,'' Joyce observes. ''Usually, these things end well—everybody's fat, happy, and warm at the end. In that one, they're not.''

Joyce enjoys reading the stories he read as a child to his own kids, and the household champion is Clement Clarke Moore's **A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS**. Starting around Thanksgiving, he says, ''we read that probably eight hundred and fifty thousand times. I can recite it by heart. The 'Dash away, dash away, dash away all' still gets my blood up. I can't read that without feeling a little bit like Errol Flynn—all that dashing.'' Joyce attributes part of the poem's appeal to its pacing. ''There's precious little lingering,'' he says. ''Santa gets in there, gets to his work, and hauls ass.''

BEYOND WATERGATE.

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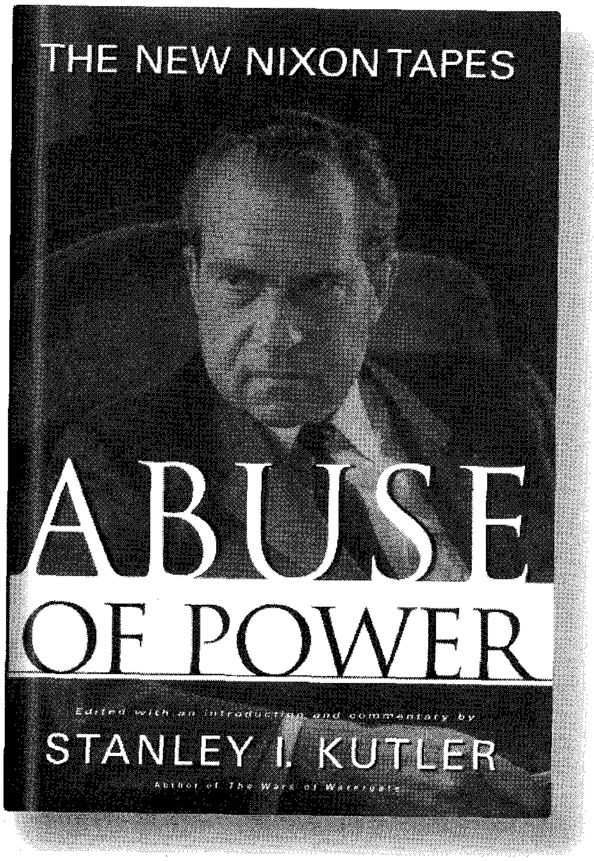
THE NEW NIXON TAPES
ABUSE OF POWER
Edited with an introduction and commentary by
STANLEY I. KUTLER
Author of The Wars of Watergate

Abuse of Power:
The New Nixon Tapes
Edited by Stanley I. Kutler

Collected here are the transcripts of every incriminating tape of the Nixon presidency. Eminent historian Stanley Kutler has edited and annotated these Oval Office conversations, which reveal stunning White House abuses and cover-up efforts. Nixon and his heirs fought for years to keep these sensitive recordings from ever being released, but now a historic Supreme Court ruling has made possible this landmark publishing event.

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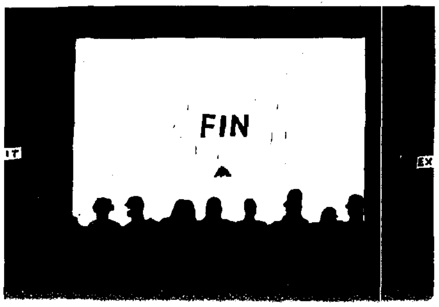


THE MOVIES

OPENING THIS WEEK

Good Will Hunting—A drama written by and starring Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, about a troubled young man with a photographic memory. Directed by Gus Van Sant. Also starring Robin Williams and Minnie Driver. Opening Dec. 5. (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin.)

Office Killer—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening Dec. 3.

Other Voices, Other Rooms—A film based on the Truman Capote novel about a thirteen-year-old boy and his relatives in the South. The screenplay was co-written by Sara Flanigan and the director, David Rocksavage. Opening Dec. 5. (Cinema 3rd Avenue and Village East Cinemas.)

Twisted—An adaptation of "Oliver Twist" written and directed by Seth Michael Donsky, set in the New York gay underground a few years hence. Opening Dec. 5. (Quad Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Alien Resurrection—Two hundred years after her death, Lieutenant Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) is reconstituted by a bunch of evil—or at least very stupid—scientists. This fourth film in the series, written by Joss Whedon and directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, follows the predictable suspense track: stuck in space, a complacent company of men and women is snacked into submission by one or more slavering bugs. On the menu this time are Brad Dourif, Dan Hedaya, Jeunet regulars Dominique Pinon and Ron Perlman, and a rather unwell-looking Winona Ryder. The story lurches from one grisly set piece to the next; some of them are beautifully staged, but the movie stubbornly refuses to hang together, and it repels far more readily than it excites.—*Anthony Lane* (12/1/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Anastasia—Director Don Bluth has made quite a few animated films ("An American Tail," "The Land Before Time") since leaving Disney in the early eighties, but none as opulent or as artistically successful as this Twentieth Century Fox cartoon musical. The Anastasia story—Nicholas II's youngest daughter escapes assassination during the Russian Revolution—has been simplified and Cinderella-ized: a lost girl must discover the princess inside her. But Bluth's breathtaking wide-screen work and his exquisite painted backgrounds (they echo "Doctor Zhivago") lend a majesty and a lyricism that give the drama emotional weight. The film doesn't burst through any of the genre's limitations; the Broadway-style numbers still sound old-fashioned (a good Babyface tune wouldn't have hurt), and the cute little sidekicks still get the wisecracks. But it's all presented at an entertaining clip, and viewers who manage to leave the hype at the door can have some fun. Co-directed by Gary Goldman.—*Bruce Diones* (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, and Ziegfeld.)

Bean—Rowan Atkinson's twitching, ear-wiggling screwball character comes to Los Angeles, where, posing as a scholarly art expert, he is to preside over the unveiling of Whistler's portrait of his mother. After causing hilarious damage all around, including sneezing on the painter's grim-faced mom, he comes up with an ingenious art-restoration plan involving egg yolks, chewing gum, and the miracle of gift-shop posters. When Atkinson isn't waddling like a penguin or braying like a donkey, his comic gift does appear to have human influences—touches of Buster Keaton, Jacques Tati, Dick Van Dyke, and Pee-wee Herman. There may be one bathroom joke too many for non-Brits, but the conceit at the heart of the witty script—that the bowings and scrapings of academic and social prestige are nothing more than the child's play of adults—should appeal to grownups everywhere. Directed by Mel Smith.—*Daphne Merkin* (11/24/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

Eve's Bayou—For her first film, the writer and director Kasi Lemmons attempts to adapt Tennessee Williams's Southern-gothic style to an African-American context. Eve, the heroine (Jurnee Smollett), a ten-year-old bourgeois Creole in late-fifties rural Louisiana, is trying to understand why her mother (an intense, elegant Lynn Whitfield) is so frigid and why her beloved father (a subdued Samuel L. Jackson) is addicted to fooling around. As long as the film sticks to Eve's point of view it's got a naïve charm; unfortunately, Lemmons mixes in Magic Realist fantasies of African voodoo and black-and-white sequences that feel less poetic than arty.—*Sarah Kerr* (Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Flubber—Robin Williams plays a flaky genius who figures out the formula for a green ooze that could replace oil as an energy source; it also dances and gurgles like a baby. This remake of the 1961 fluff classic "The Absent-Minded Professor" achieves the impossible: the usually hyperactive Williams is overshadowed here by special effects. John Hughes co-wrote the script (with Bill Walsh), packing it with a nasty violence reminiscent of his "Home Alone" series. (Typical joke: a man gets whacked on the head by a flubber-enhanced bowling ball. Judging by the deafening clang on the soundtrack, he should be dead, but there he is in the next scene, with a huge, throbbing welt on his forehead.) Directed by Les Mayfield.—*S.K.* (Chelsea West, Guild, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

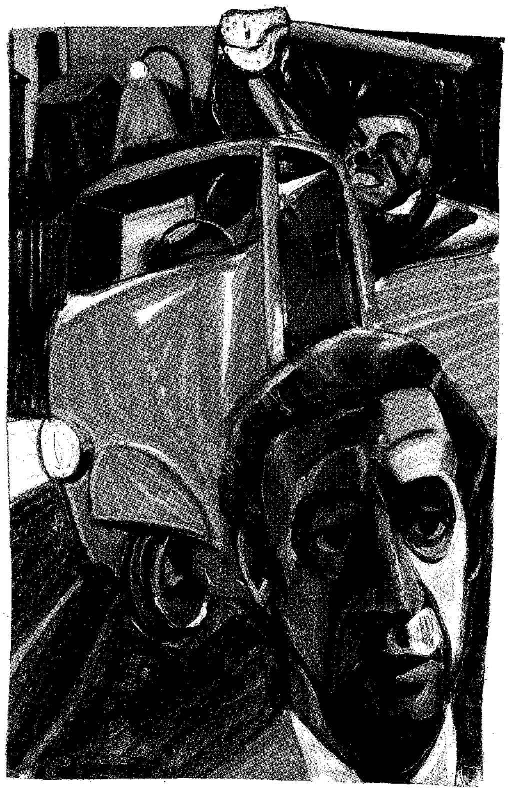
Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man (1943)—The first of Universal's monster team-ups has enough entertaining silliness to propel you past Bela Lugosi's turn as Frankenstein's monster. Lugosi lurches around in a haphazard, low-rent way that's particularly incongruous in this otherwise dexterous production. The director, Roy William Neill, brings to the proceedings the storybook gravity of his Sherlock Holmes films; and Lon Chaney, Jr., with his worried big-dog look, is once again perfectly cast as Larry Talbot, who sprouts fur and fangs "when the wolfsbane blooms and the moon is full and bright." (You never do find out which supervillain is stronger.)—*Michael Sragow* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Dec. 6.)

International House (1933)—In this spirited mishmash, bigwigs from many countries converge on Wu-Hu, China, to land the rights to a prototype of television; it's supposed to project a six-day bike race but instead picks up everything from ships at sea to musical acts, like Cab Calloway singing "Reefer Man." Unlike latter-day gag movies of the "Airplane!"/"Hot Shots!" ilk, revue comedies like this one allowed vaudeville personalities to create their own space to shine in. George Burns and Gracie Allen show off their crazy comic syncopation, while W. C. Fields, as Professor Quail, lands his auto-gyro on a hotel roof garden, asks, "Is this Kansas City, Kansas, or Kansas City, Missouri?," and saunters away with the rest of the movie. Eddie Sutherland directed. The cast includes Stuart Erwin, Peggy Hopkins Joyce (as herself), and Franklin Pangborn; Bela Lugosi is self-parodistically—and gloriously—imperious as the head of the Moscow Utility Company.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 6-7.)

The Jackal—An international thriller directed by Michael Caton-Jones and loosely based on the 1973 classic "The Day of the Jackal." Bruce Willis is the villainous master of disguises out to assassinate an important political figure, Richard Gere an imprisoned I.R.A. terrorist brought in to track him down. Though Gere is game, Willis barely registers: his character is humorless, and so is this dryly competent film.—*B.D.* (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea West, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, National Twin, and Orpheum VII.)

The Man Who Knew Too Little—Bill Murray has a wonderfully understated and sarcastic delivery in this spy comedy, smoothly directed by Jon Amiel ("The Singing Detective"), but it's a performance begging for a challenge. Although the screenplay, by Robert Farrar and Howard Franklin, offers a premise that allows for some funny Clouseau-like bits—a video clerk thinks he's participating in live outdoor theatre when in fact he's been mistaken for an intelligence agent—the writing itself is thin on laughs. Murray carries the film, instinctively goosing the flat dialogue into comic shape.—*B.D.* (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and 64th and 2nd.)

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil—Clint Eastwood directs John Cusack and Kevin Spacey in a film version of John Berendt's 1994 book about a murder in Savannah. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII.)



Yves Montand in Costa-Gavras's "Z."

ANDREA VENTURA

Office Killer—The débût film by the still photographer Cindy Sherman is as cool as the self-portraits she's famous for. Carol Kane plays Dorine, a homely, mistreated copy editor at a magazine that's modernizing its editorial process. When she's demoted to part-time work at home, she starts killing off her bosses: a virago editor (Barbara Sukowa), a bratty writer (David Thornton), a nice girl who turned ambitious and joined management (Jeanne Tripplehorn). Downsizing is a great premise for a horror movie, and Kane gives a strong, witty, revolting performance. Yet the film is neither as original nor as much fun as you want it to be. The only time Sherman really responds to the material is in the scenes showing what Dorine does to the corpses: they're exquisitely gross—and hard to take. Molly Ringwald does a spirited turn as a slutty magazine employee.—*S.K.* (Film Forum; starting Dec. 3.)

One Night Stand—Mike Figgis's first film since "Leaving Las Vegas" is high on atmosphere and embarrassingly low on content. Wesley Snipes plays a filmmaker who's sold out and now directs TV commercials in Los Angeles. He flies to New York to see an H.I.V.-positive friend (Robert Downey, Jr.), and fate brings him together with a fetching, platinum-blond Nastassja Kinski, who bites her lip and lets clumps of hair hang in her face as a sign of vulnerability. Back in L.A., he fights with his wife (Ming-Na Wen, in an uptight, unconvincing performance). Snipes is good enough to make a selfish character seem sympathetic and deep, and Downey tries hard with the maudlin role of the martyr who teaches others to seize the day. But New York isn't as violent as Figgis makes it look, and L.A. isn't the glamorous wasteland he imagines. And Snipes's crisis isn't profound—it's really just a contest between the irritating wife and the hair-in-her-face girlfriend: a no-brainer. Figgis also wrote the lush, jazzy score, which changes mood every ten seconds, announcing the drift of each scene like a bullhorn.—*S.K.* (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Solid Gold Cadillac (1956)—Richard Quine directed Abe Burrows's adaptation of the George S. Kaufman–Howard Teichmann Broadway play about the little-old-lady stockholder in a giant corporation who acquires enough proxies to take over the business; in the movie, this eccentric stockholder becomes a woman of marriageable age. Judy Holliday's familiar cartoon mixture of wide-eyed primordial simplicity and complacent urban abrasiveness is wonderful in a sketch but a little monotonous in a starring role like this one. However, the fault here isn't primarily hers: it's in the formula Broadway comedy, with its predictable situations and sledgehammer laugh lines.—*Pauline Kael* (Whitney Museum; Dec. 7.)

Starship Troopers—A futuristic, overproduced version of the fifties flicks in which giant insects wage war on mankind. There's some extraordinary computer bug work by the special-effects master Phil Tippett ("Jurassic Park"), but Paul Verhoeven has directed with a bludgeon and cast the movie with actor-models whose soap-opera dialogue suggests "Melrose Place Goes to War."—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

La Strada (1954)—The theme of Federico Fellini's spiritual fable is that everyone has a purpose in the universe. It is acted out by three symbolic characters. Giulietta Masina is the waif Gelsomina (soul, innocence, spirit, dreams); Anthony Quinn is the strong man Zampanò (brute physical strength, man as animal); Richard Basehart is an artist-fool (mind). Though the background of the film is neorealist poverty, it is transformed by the romanticism of the conception. Even if one rejects the concepts of this movie, its mood and the details of scenes stay with one; a year or two later, a gesture or a situation suddenly brings it all back. In Italian.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 3-4.)

The Sweet Hereafter—An exquisitely sober movie by Atom Egoyan, based on the novel by Russell Banks. Ian Holm, holding the screen with volcanic force, plays the big-city lawyer who is trying to bring a class-action suit on behalf of a small blue-collar town in British Columbia in the wake of a school-bus accident. His rage over the fate of his own daughter (Caerthan Banks), who has disappeared into drugs and AIDS, lends credibility to his mission, but it also blurs the line between his genuine sorrow and his shrewd milking of other people's. The uniformly good cast includes Bruce Greenwood as a wary mechanic who has lost twins in the accident, Alberta Watson as the lachrymose

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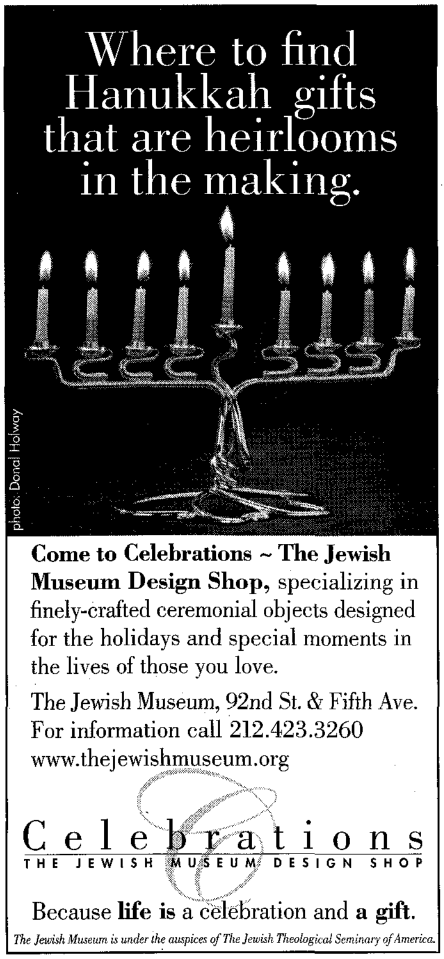

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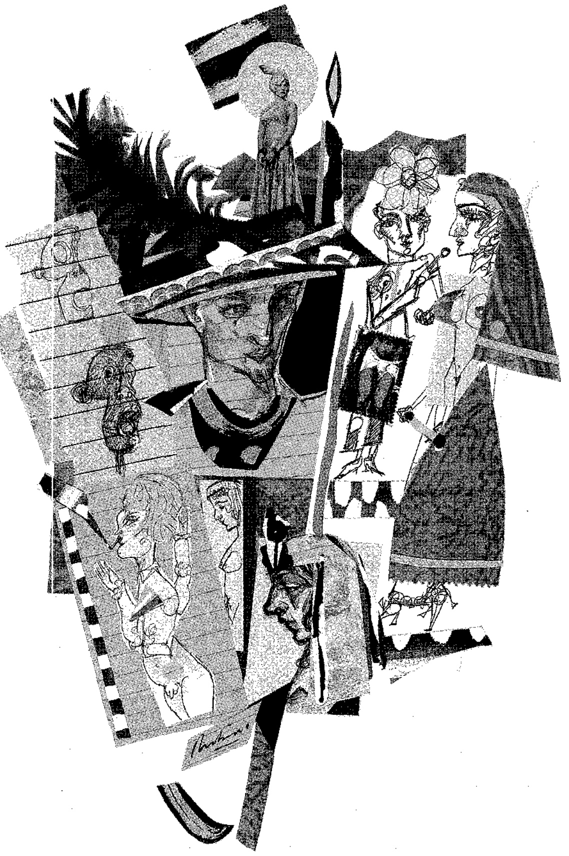
erotic interest, and Sarah Polley, who is extraordinary as a paralyzed survivor of the crash who tells a lie that keeps the community together. Also with Arsinée Khanjian and Earl Pastko.—*D.M.* (11/24/97) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



At the American Museum of the Moving Image, films directed by, and starring, Jack Smith.

CORNEL RUBINO

THE TANGO LESSON—Sally Potter's latest venture, ostensibly a feminist fable about sexual power play and the intricate workings of the artistic imagination, is an unwatchable exercise in undiluted narcissism. Potter plays herself, a frustrated movie director who decides to take tango lessons from a young, good-looking dancer (Pablo Veron) and then proceeds to make a film about a movie director who's taking instruction from—or is she instructing?—a young, good-looking dancer. This is either an example of a brilliantly post-structuralist, post-narrative approach to plot or the flimsiest story line yet to come down the pike. The dialogue is banal when it's not altogether clichéd, and the underlying fantasy—that a young man and an older woman would be drawn to each other less out of mutual exploitation than out of a vaguely shared sense of deracination (there's the shred of a subplot about Jewishness)—is so unexamined as to feel uncomfortably self-serving. Set in Paris and Buenos Aires, and shot mostly in elegant black-and-white, the movie might have been conceived by a fashion stylist; indeed, Potter's clothes, from her simple white T-shirts to her evening wear, are the best thing about it.—*D.M.* (Angelika Film Center and Regency.)

WELCOME TO SARAJEVO—Michael Winterbottom's fine and splenetic movie stars Stephen Dillane as a British TV correspondent who, during the siege of Sarajevo in 1992, finds himself becoming involved, against his better judgment, with a young Bosnian orphan (Emira Nusevic). The combination of Dillane's studious calm and Winterbottom's nervous anger propels the picture way beyond heartwarming. There are moments—the juxtaposition of human chaos with political talking heads, for instance—when Winterbottom's method verges on agitprop. The force of the movie, however, rests in the stuttering rhythms of its violence; the casual wasting and wrecking of life is almost too much to bear. With Woody Harrelson as a hot-blooded American journalist, Marisa Tomei as an aid worker, and the excellent Goran Visnjic as the hero's driver.—*A.L.* (12/1/97) (Angelika Film Center.)

THE WINGS OF THE DOVE—The director Iain Softley's adaptation of Henry James's magisterial late novel starts out as a jazzy, confident effort. But it gets a bit sluggish with the entrance of Milly Theale (Alison Elliott), the rich, good-hearted American orphan whom the penniless Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter) persuades her lover, Merton Densher (Linus Roache), to seduce in order to secure their future together. Elliott doesn't have the depth to convey Milly's galvanizing goodness, and this deficiency threatens to undo the film, despite its glorious costumes and all that golden Venice light.—*D.M.* (11/10/97) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Z (1969)—How a political murder is made to look like an accident. Costa-Gavras's extraordinary thriller—one of the fastest, most exciting melodramas ever made—was based on contemporary events in Greece. The picture never loses emotional contact with the audience; it derives from the traditions of the American gangster movies and prison pictures and anti-Fascist melodramas of the forties. The young Greek expatriate director uses a searching, active camera style that's a little too self-consciously dynamic, and his staccato editing style and the use of loud music to build up suspense for the violent sequences put a lot of pressure on you. When the picture is over and you've caught your breath you know perfectly well that its techniques of excitation could as easily be used by a smart Fascist filmmaker, if there were one. Luckily there isn't. With Yves Montand, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Irene Papas, François Périer, Renato Salvatori, Charles Denner, Pierre Dux, Marcel Bozzufi, Magali Noel, and Georges Geret. The cinematography is by Raoul Coutard. In French—*P.K.* (Paris; starting Dec. 5.)

ALSO PLAYING

BANG: Quad Cinema. . . . **BENT:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square. . . . **CONSPIRACY THEORY** (reviewed in our issue of 8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **COP LAND** (8/18/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE EDGE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FAST, CHEAP & OUT OF CONTROL:** Film Forum 3 . . . . **THE FULL MONTY:** Embassy 1, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Murray Hill Cinemas. . . . **THE GAME:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HAPPY TOGETHER:** Quad Cinema. . . . **THE ICE STORM** (9/29/97): Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Murray Hill Cinemas. . . . **I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **JOHN GRISHAM'S THE RAINMAKER:** East 85th Street, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly. . . . **KISS OR KILL:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **MEN IN BLACK** (7/7/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MORTAL KOMBAT: ANNIHILATION:** Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Gotham Cinema, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **THE PEACEMAKER** (10/6/97): Worldwide Cinemas.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Dec. 3: "Law and Order" (1969, Frederick Wiseman) and "The Chair" (1962, Robert Drew and Gregory Shuker).... Dec. 4-6: "Don't Look Back" (1966, D. A. Pennebaker) and "Monterey Pop" (1968, Pennebaker).... Dec. 7: "Jane" (1962, Drew and Hope Ryden) and "Susan Starr" (1962, Drew and Ryden).... Dec. 8: "Free at Last" (1968, Shuker, Nicholas Proferes, and James Desmond), "A Time for Burning" (1967, William Jersey), and "The Children Were Watching" (1960, Drew and Richard Leacock).... Dec. 9: "The Night Club Lady" (1932, Irving Cummings) and "The Circus Queen Murder" (1933, Roy William Neill).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films directed by Luchino Visconti; in Italian, with English subtitles. Dec. 4 and Dec. 5 at 2:30: "After Visconti: Interviews" (1997, Caterina d'Amico; in English, French, and Italian).... Dec. 4 at 6: "Death in Venice" (1971).... Dec. 5 at 2:30: "The Stranger" (1967).... Dec. 5 at 6:30: "Ludwig II" (1972).... Dec. 6 at 1:30: "Rocco and His Brothers" (1960).... Dec. 6 at 5: "Sandra" (1965).... Dec. 7 at 1: "The Leopard" (1963).... Dec. 7 at 5: "Conversation Piece" (1974).... Dec. 8 at 2:30: "White Nights" (1957).... Dec. 8 at 6: "Days of Glory" (1945).... ¶ Dec. 4 at 6:30 and Dec. 5 at 3: "The Paternal Line" (1995, Maryse Sistach and José Buel; in Spanish).... ¶ Dec. 5 at 6: "We Free Kings" (1995, Sergio Citti; in Italian).... ¶ A program of recent videos from China. Dec. 5 at 8:30: "Out of Phoenixbridge" (Li Hong).... Dec. 6 at 2: "Bumming in Beijing—The Last Dreamers" (Wu Wenguang).... Dec. 6 at 5: "1966, My Time in the Red Guards" (Wu).... Dec. 7 at 1:30: "I Graduated!" (Shi Jian and Chen Jue), "Flow" (Yau Ching), and "Rocking the Great Walls" (Victor Huey).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Dec. 3 at 2 and 6:20 and Dec. 4 at 4:15: "Man on a Tightrope" (1953, Elia Kazan).... ¶ Dec. 3 at 4:05 and 8:30 and Dec. 4 at 2: "La Strada" (†).... ¶ *A program of new films from* Spain; in Spanish, with English subtitles. Dec. 5 at 2 and 6:15 and Dec. 7 at 6: "The Good Life" (David Trueba).... Dec. 5 at 4:15 and Dec. 6 at 4 and 8:15: "Pajarico" (Carlos Saura).... Dec. 6 at 6:15 and Dec. 7 at 4 and 8: "Family" (Fernando León).... Dec. 9 at 2: "Storm the Skies" (José Luis López-Linares and Javier Rioyo).... Dec. 9 at 4: "The Matchmaker" (Gerardo Vera).... ¶ Dec. 6-7 at 2: "International House" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Dec. 6 at 2 and 6: "Normal Love" (1963, Jack Smith).... Dec. 6 at 4:30: "Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man" (†).... Dec. 7 at 2: "Camp" (1965, Andy Warhol).... Dec. 7 at 4: "The Secret of Rented Island" (1977) and "I Was a Male Yvonne De Carlo" (1970), both with Jack Smith.

From Paris to Hollywood—The Alliance Française presents a series of French films (shown in Florence Gould Hall) alongside the American films based on them (shown in Tinker Auditorium). Dec. 9 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Les Compères" (1983, Francis Veber).... Dec. 9 at 6:15 and 8:45: "Father's Day" (1997, Ivan Reitman). (Both at 55 E. 59th St. *355-6160.*)

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Dec. 3-5 at 7: "A Couch in New York" (1995, Chantal Akerman).... Dec. 3 at 8: "Murder and Murder" (1996, Yvonne Rainer).... Dec. 3-5 at 9: "Dead Heart" (1996, Nicholas Parsons).... Dec. 3 at 10:15: "Oscar Wilde" (1960, Gregory Ratoff).... Dec. 5-6 at 8:30 and 10 and Dec. 7 at 8:15: Two different programs of Kenneth Anger works.... Dec. 6-7 at 2: "Boudu Saved from Drowning" (1932, Jean Renoir; in French).... Dec. 6-7 at 3:40: "A Day in the Country" (1936, Renoir; in French).... Dec. 6-7 at 5:30 and 10:15 and Dec. 8-9 at 7: "We Free Kings" (1995, Sergio Citti; in Italian).... Dec. 6-7 at 7:50: "The Silences of the Palace" (1994, Moufida Tlatli).... Dec. 7 at 5: "Old and New" (1930, Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian).... Dec. 8-9 at 9:15: "Chappaqua" (1967, Conrad Rooks).... Dec. 9 at 7: "Pandora and the Flying Dutchman" (1951, Albert Lewin).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Dec. 3 at 11:30: "Indiscretion of an American Wife" (1953, Vittorio De Sica).... Dec. 3 at 1:30: "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Billy Wilder).... Dec. 3 at 4: "The Ambassador's Daughter" (1956, Norman Krasna).... Dec. 4-6 at 3: "Lovely to Look At" (1952, Mervyn LeRoy).... Dec. 4 at 6 and Dec. 5-6 at noon: "I Can Get It for You Wholesale" (1951, Michael Gordon).... Dec. 7 at 12:30: "The Solid Gold Cadillac" (†).... Dec. 7 at 3: "Designing Woman" (1957, Vincente Minnelli).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.—Through Dec. 9, the fifth annual Contemporary African Diaspora Film Festival, featuring forty films from twenty-six countries. (For information about titles, schedules, and tickets, call 749-6020.)

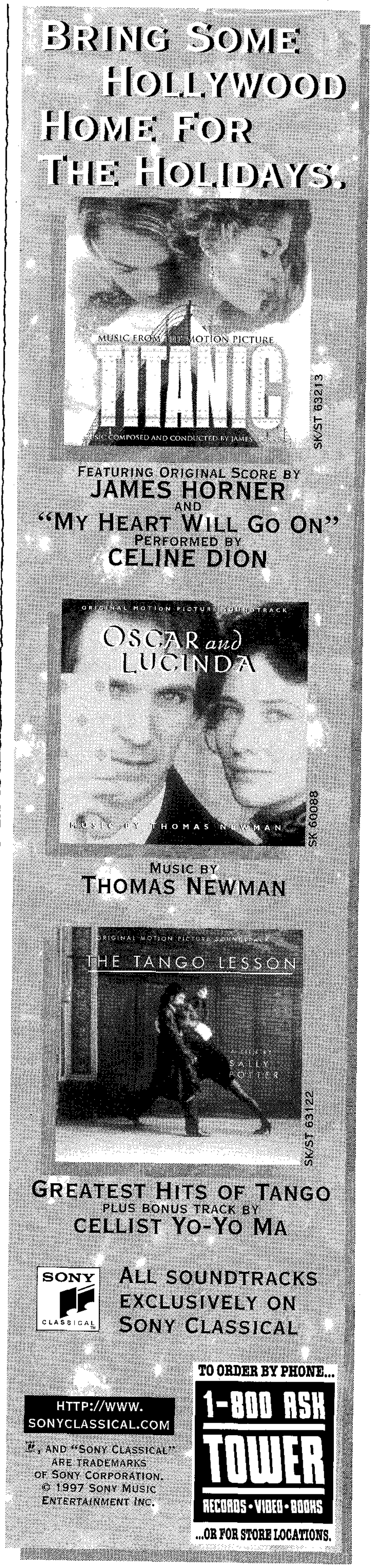
A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Dec. 7 at 7, the feature will be "The Hotel New Hampshire" (1984, Tony Richardson).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Dec. 31: "Love Among the Ruins" (1975, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn and Laurence Olivier. (Showings Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2 and 4; and Thursdays and Fridays at 2, 4, and 6.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

FAX FROM LONDON

A literary grudge-match rings in the holiday season.

The spectator sport known as le Carré v. Rushdie has taken an aggressive new turn: recently, the two authors have been playing taunts-and-epithets on the Letters page of the *Guardian* with enough pumped-up vitriol to put Tim Henman's backhand to shame. The first shot was lobbed back in 1989, when Rushdie, four months into his Ayatollah-decreed death sentence, wrote an eviscerating review of le Carré's thriller "The Russia House"; le Carré responded by declaring that Rushdie had brought the *fatwa* upon himself and criticized him for going ahead with the paperback edition of "The Satanic Verses," suggesting that Rushdie put a higher value on cash than on the lives of his publisher's employees. For a while, the match seemed stalled at deuce. Last month, however, le Carré, responding to American reviewers who had found his 1996 book, "The Tailor of Panama," anti-Semitic, made a speech to the Anglo-Israel Association saying that he felt like the victim of a witch-hunt. When the *Guardian* reprinted the speech, Rushdie apparently saw a chance for an overhead smash.

"It would be easier to sympathize with him had he not been so ready to join in an earlier vilification against a fellow writer," Rushdie wrote, of le Carré, on November 18th.

"Rushdie's way with the truth is as self-serving as ever," le Carré returned the next day.

"I'm grateful to John le Carré for refreshing all our memories about exactly how pompous an ass he can be," Rushdie shot back.

The day after, le Carré accused Rushdie of "self-canonisation," and Rushdie wrote back, " 'Ignorant' and 'semi-literate' are dunces' caps he has skilfully fitted on his own head."

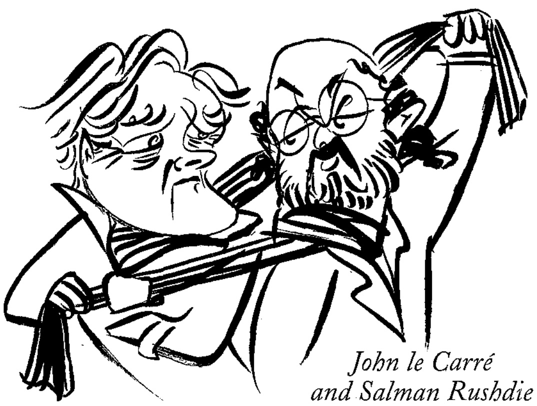
So far, le Carré has referred to Rushdie as a paragon of "cultural intolerance" and a "rabid ayatollah," while Rushdie has scored off le Carré by accusing him of selling out the values of George Smiley, his most famous character, and by calling le Carré a "philistine." (Rushdie has been aided by the journalist Christopher Hitchens, who wrote a letter to the *Guardian* comparing le Carré to a man "who, having relieved himself in his own hat, makes haste to clamp the brimming chapeau on his head.")

There hasn't been a London literary feud like this since A. S. Byatt took on Martin Amis over his dentist's bills. For some color commentary, let's go to the stands:

The Loafer, the publishing columnist of the *Guardian:* "Novelists are expected to be guardians of culture and civilization, so when you see them rolling up their sleeves and thumping each other in print, it gives a kind of vicarious thrill and proves they're just as short-tempered and vain as everyone else."

Christopher Hitchens: "I'd prefer to think of this as a genuine disagreement on principle instead of a grudge match. There has never been this kind of death call against a British citizen for authorship in history, and that must not be forgotten. If it has descended to a more vulgar level, it may be partly my fault. I wrote in because I wanted to stand up and be counted. I also wanted to hurt le Carré's feelings."

Frances D'Souza, chairman of the International Rushdie Defense Committee: "The important thing is to thank God we still live in a world where there is room for this kind of mutual abuse to take place." —VANESSA FRIEDMAN



John le Carré and Salman Rushdie

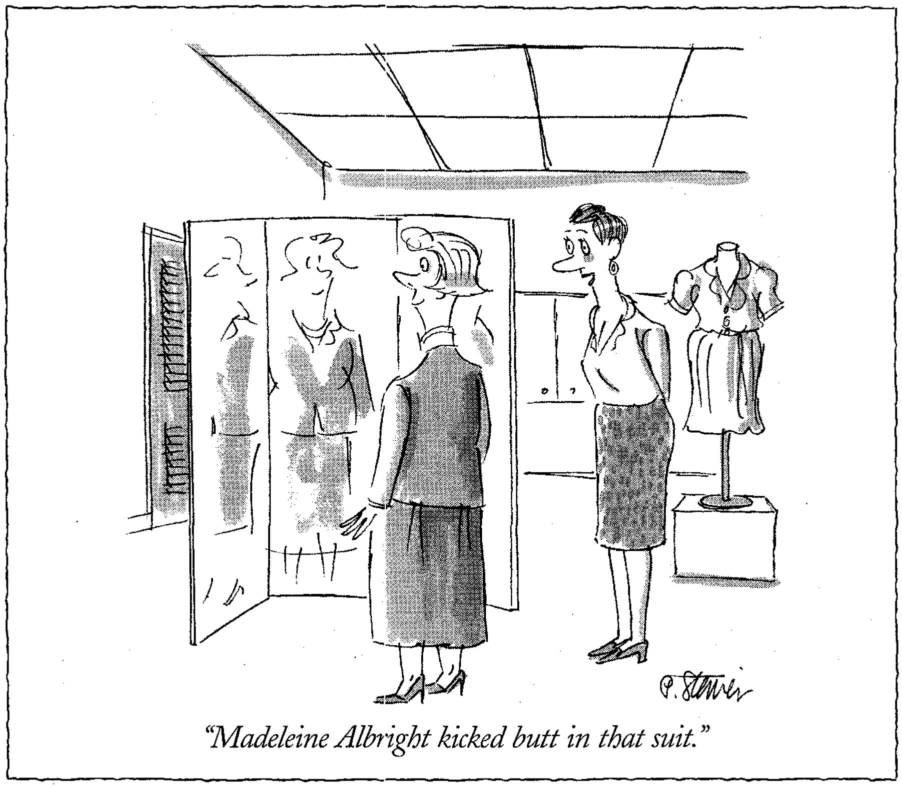
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

A cheap loft, a missing couple, and their landlord haunt Manhattan.

In New York, real estate is a lot like sex: a subject of endless fascination and a source of intense fantasies. In a way, it's a little bit *too* much like sex: there doesn't seem to be enough for everyone and everyone else seems to have more of it than you do.

But the unseemly envy that overcomes New Yorkers when they hear about someone's cheap, rent-stabilized apartment masks a more profound feeling. It's fear. Specifically, fear of the masters of our universe: landlords. Landlords—the very word, with its feudal connotations, its bald assumption of rightful authority, chafes—are in every way the lords of the land. Our fear—and loathing—of them seems to have fuelled people's obsessive interest in a story that's been unfolding in the city over the last few weeks. On November 7th, two tenants of a loft on Pearl Street, at the lower tip of Manhattan, disappeared. Michael Sullivan, one of the tenants, had lived in the loft for twenty years; his girlfriend, Camden Sylvia, moved in with him about five years ago. Their lives, as described in the newspapers, sounded familiar to many middle-class New Yorkers: Sullivan, fifty-four, is a dancer and choreographer and a clerk at the New Museum; Sylvia, thirty-six, is a real-estate agent and artist. In the current get-rich-or-get-out climate of the city, this is virtually a marginal life style, a throwback to New York's mythological bohemian past. The piece of rare good luck that made such a life possible was a prominent feature of the news stories about the missing couple: their rent was three hundred dollars a month. Goggle-eyed reporters pointed out that the apartment—fourteen hundred square feet, a block from the East River—was now worth "possibly ten times as much."



"Madeleine Albright kicked butt in that suit."

So far, the only thing like a clue to the couple's disappearance is that they were having a dispute with their landlord, a man named Robert Rodriguez, over inadequate heat—a dispute that, apparently, occurred every fall. New York landlords do seem to take ritual pleasure in waiting a little longer than is strictly legal (or human) to turn on the heat come autumn; as a downstairs neighbor of Sullivan's was quoted as saying, "April may be the cruellest month, according to T. S. Eliot, but for loft tenants it's October and March." Although occasionally we are asked to be sympathetic to the difficulties that small landlords face, New Yorkers are nevertheless rightly cynical about landlords in general. Tenants who say they have a good relationship with their landlord often turn out, upon close questioning, to be related to their landlord.

Nine days after Sullivan and Sylvia disappeared, something happened that was shocking without being altogether surprising: their landlord disappeared, too. Rodriguez isn't officially a suspect in the case, so all that police and reporters have been able to do is, literally, sniff around for clues. Police dogs, prepped with a whiff of one of Sullivan's socks, have come up empty-nosed in their searches of the Pearl Street building and around the perimeter of Rodriguez's property upstate. Helicopters have seen nothing suspicious. But Rodriguez, who had been described in press reports as being a "nice guy," was now being described as "a man who was strapped with financial difficulties and sometimes quick to anger." A recent *Times* piece, written in a decadence-induced swoon, seemed to rush to moral, if not legal, judgment: "His Orange County property appears to bespeak an affluent style of living. In addition to the large, two-story main house sheathed in cedar, there is a separate three-car garage—one of the Rodriguez cars is a Mercedes.... The curving driveway enters under spreading oak trees." (The original house on the property burned down in 1992; investigators concluded that the cause of the fire was arson, but the case was never solved. A year later, with the insurance money, Rodriguez bought the building on Pearl Street.) Last week, Rodriguez sent word to authorities that he was alive and well, but his whereabouts remained unknown.

There is something undeniably cloak-and-daggerish, something cautionary, something Poe-like about this story, partly because the setting—Pearl Street—calls up images of old New York, with its gaslight, its foggy nights, and its waterfront intrigue. (In fact, Captain Kidd used to live down the block from Sullivan and Sylvia's building.) But the anxiety that the story provokes is a very modern one, felt even by the lucky among us, an anxiety that makes it impossible ever to be completely comfortable in this city, where, when it comes to real estate, no good deal goes unpunished. —NANCY FRANKLIN

INK

Los Angeles hosts snub Dominick Dunne's uninvited guest.

DOMINICK DUNNE'S new book about the O. J. Simpson trial, "Another City, Not My Own," is characterized on its dust jacket as "A Novel in the Form of a Memoir"—a category unanticipated by the Dewey decimal system, and one that allows Dunne to make up a name for the character based on himself while using the real names of all his sources. When he is asked why he felt free to write about the various confidences whispered to him by L.A. swells at private dinner parties, Dunne uses the Never Off Duty defense. "Here I am, a reasonably well-known writer, and I am out in L.A. writing a book," Dunne said the other day, at the outset of a cross-country book tour. "And when people come up and pour stories in my ear, they *can't* think I'm not going to use them." But what they also couldn't think—because who would?—was that Dunne would depict them socializing with the serial killer Andrew Cunanan. Dunne's basically truthful memoir is interlaced with a plot in which Cunanan makes four entirely fictional appearances, culminating in a fictional murder. This literary device has not been applauded by the aforementioned swells.

"Ray Stark was very unhappy with me for putting Andrew Cunanan in his house," Dunne said. The book includes an account of a dinner party honoring Marcia Clark chez Stark, at which Cunanan—a fictional guest's trophy boy—eyes a Monet and is seated next to Stark's daughter Wendy. Another time, Dunne places Cunanan in New York, as the date of a made-up male guest at a birthday party for Princess Firyal of Jordan, held at the home of the socialite businessman Gil Shiva. Princess Firyal, when asked for her reaction to having Cunanan at her celebration, said, "With all due respect to Nick Dunne, I fail to see the humor," though Nan Kempner, who is seated next to Dunne at the party, had no problem keeping fictional company with Gianni Versace's killer. "I have had dinner with worse people than that," she said.

Elsewhere, Dunne has the inspired idea of pairing up Cunanan with Bernard Lafferty, the late heiress Doris Duke's former butler, who inherited huge sums from her and is now conveniently beyond libel, being dead himself. In the book, Cunanan accompanies Lafferty to the reopening of the Beverly Hills Hotel, where he urges the Dunne character to put him in one of his books, suggesting that Keanu Reeves could play him in the miniseries. (Reeves's people declined to comment on this casting suggestion.) And then Cunanan crops up in the book's murderous final pages. A. Scott Berg, the distinguished Hollywood biographer, who in "Another City, Not My Own" is writing the Dunne character's biography, discovers an audiotape that is the crucial piece of evidence linking Cunanan to the crime.

"I'm flattered that Nick Dunne would 'select' me to be his biographer, but I must confess that I hadn't thought of him as the next in my series of subjects—Max Perkins, Samuel Goldwyn, Charles Lindbergh," Berg told me. Nor, he said, does he quite recognize himself in Dunne's characterization: in the book Berg wavers over whether to turn the audiotape in to the police or save it for the book he's writing. "The real Scott Berg would have no such problem," said the real Scott Berg. "I'd call the cops in an L.A. minute." —REBECCA MEAD

DEPT. OF HOOPLA

Vogue brings the great outdoors into Le Cirque 2000.

ANNA WINTOUR, the editor of *Vogue*, gave a party for Jeffrey Steingarten, her food writer, the other day. Mr. Steingarten is the principal literary ornament of Ms. Wintour's magazine, and his columns have now been collected into a handsome book, eponymously entitled "The Man Who Ate Everything." It is a book worth celebrating; so well prepared, so expertly seasoned, and so full of flavorsome surprises is it that if it were a meal even Mr. Steingarten himself would have difficulty finding fault with it. The party was full of varied and interesting people, drawn not only from Mr. Steingarten's foodie present but also from his eclectic past: Harvard *Lampoon* prankster; copyboy for the seminal political-satire magazine *Monocle;* lawyer; public-television-talk-show producer; aide to Mayor Kevin White, of Boston; Tibetan Buddhist adept; book-publishing executive. Naturally, the canapés were excellent, especially the roasted new potatoes topped with white truffles; the sunny-side-up quail's eggs topped with caviar on lightly sautéed brioche; and the paper-thin slices of lardo di maiale di Colonnata, which is believed to have been Michelangelo's favorite form of pig fat. But what about the décor?

Well, the venue was Le Cirque 2000, which occupies part of the former Villard mansion, on Madison Avenue, across from the stern of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Le Cirque 2000, while arguably on the flashy side in its public rooms, has a large, wood-panelled, high-ceilinged, fireplace-equipped, Landmarks Conservancy-protected function room where the party actually took place. The problem was the carpet. It looks like a lot of garish geometric shapes cut out of bright-colored construction paper. In other words, it looks like the floor of an out-of-control kindergarten. Anna Wintour is reliably reported to think that it is hideous. So, for the occasion, she had it covered with leaves. Nice autumn leaves, from trees.

If you are the editor of *Vogue* and you need leaves, do you grab a rake and head for Central Park? You do not. You call Robert Isabell, the big society florist. Mr. Isabell knows where to get leaves. Or he has people on his staff who know where to get them. "I have no idea where they came from," he told us. "Probably New Jersey or Long Island. They were picked for their color. I just say to the leaf pickers, 'Beautiful, colored autumn leaves,' and they know what I want. That I don't want brown. That I want warm shades. That they have to still have moisture in them, like freshly fallen leaves." Then we asked Mr. Isabell a vulgar question. "I can't give out any prices," he replied. "I never do. That's up to the client. If *Vogue* wants to tell you what it costs, they can. But they won't even know for a month, until they get the bill."

In any case, the leaves worked. They created a festive, even joyful, ambience. It is no accident that Anna Wintour is the editor of *Vogue* and that Robert Isabell is the big society florist. These people know what they are doing.

In an essay entitled "Salad: The Silent Killer," Mr. Steingarten has predicted that the Surgeon General of the United States will soon mandate a new warning label: "Excess Consumption of Salad Ingredients Can Cause Vitamin Deficiency, Bad Skin, Lathyrism, Anemia, and, Quite Frankly, Death." This was a courageous thing to write in a fashion magazine; salad, after all, is the fashion world's (and the *Vogue* staff's) staff of life. At the party, women all over the room were repeatedly bending over to pry stacks of leaves off their sharp, spiky heels. Mr. Steingarten surveyed this scene with satisfaction. "There are times when it is perfectly acceptable to eat raw leaves," he remarked, popping a bit of deep-fried foie gras into his mouth. "On the whole, though, I prefer them on the carpet." —HENDRIK HERTZBERG

THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

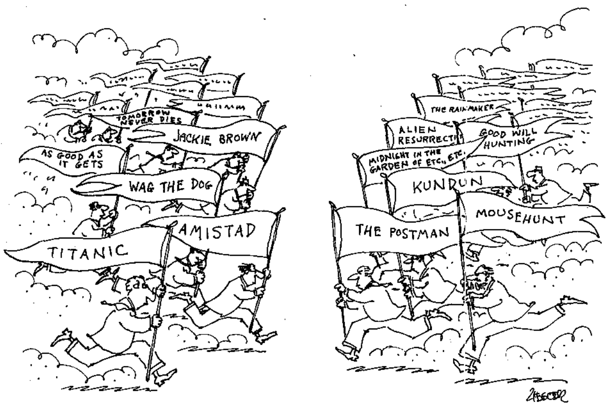
AUTEUR GRIDLOCK

During the month of December, every day at the box office feels like D Day.

BY KURT ANDERSEN

DOES any other country have an entire season devoted to profligacy—five straight weeks of public gluttony? More turkey, more spending, more drinking, more parties, more canapés, more pie, more travelling, more gifts, more bonuses, more.

It therefore makes a perfect kind of maniac American sense that this is the season when Hollywood shoots its wad. From Thanksgiving until the New Year, a new picture opens at least once a day, on average. Inevitably, three-quarters of them are box-office failures, and this December's glut constitutes a special kind of mad, high-end show-business stunt, a demolition derby of Bugattis and Ferraris. More remarkable, there are new films this month by nearly all the most illustrious American directors, including Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Woody Allen, James Cameron, Barry Levinson, James Brooks, Quentin Tarantino, Gus Van Sant, Clint Eastwood, and Kevin Costner. We are about to experience auteur gridlock.



JACK ZIEGLER

There are two main reasons that so many movies get crammed into America's infiniplexes in December. The first is Christmas vacation, which bloats the audience with millions of antsy children looking to escape their parents, and vice versa. Bob Levin, who is in charge of marketing for Sony Pictures, says that at the end of December "you have weekday after weekday that is *each* as big as a fall *weekend*." (If Hollywood had its way, Christmas and New Year's Day would always fall on Thursday, as they do this year, to take advantage of the long post-holiday weekends.) It's no easier to have a hit at Christmas, but Christmastime hits can become really big hits, as "Beavis and Butt-head Do America" and "Scream" did last year.

The other quintessentially holiday releases are glossy and soulful and important, precisely the kind of movies the "Scream" audience hates: meandering sweet-and-sour films with long titles (Eastwood's "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," Brooks's "As Good as It Gets") and pretty, inspiring social-studies films with really short, opaque titles ("Amistad," Spielberg's slave-revolt story; "Kundun," Scorsese's China-versus-Tibet epic; "The Postman," Costner's post-Apocalypse tale). Surely the season's good-will-toward-men glow makes audiences more receptive to certain films—"Philadelphia," "Schindler's List," and "Shine" were all Christmas hits—but it's Oscarlust that pulls these movies into December. When I asked the director Nora Ephron why so many big-deal directors were releasing so many big-deal films right now, she told me, "Because this is simply the right time of year to release a serious movie. The other eleven months no one is capable of seeing a serious movie." The "ten best" season proceeds seamlessly into the Golden Globe and Academy Award seasons, so a Christmas release insures that a Significant Film is fresh in everyone's mind.

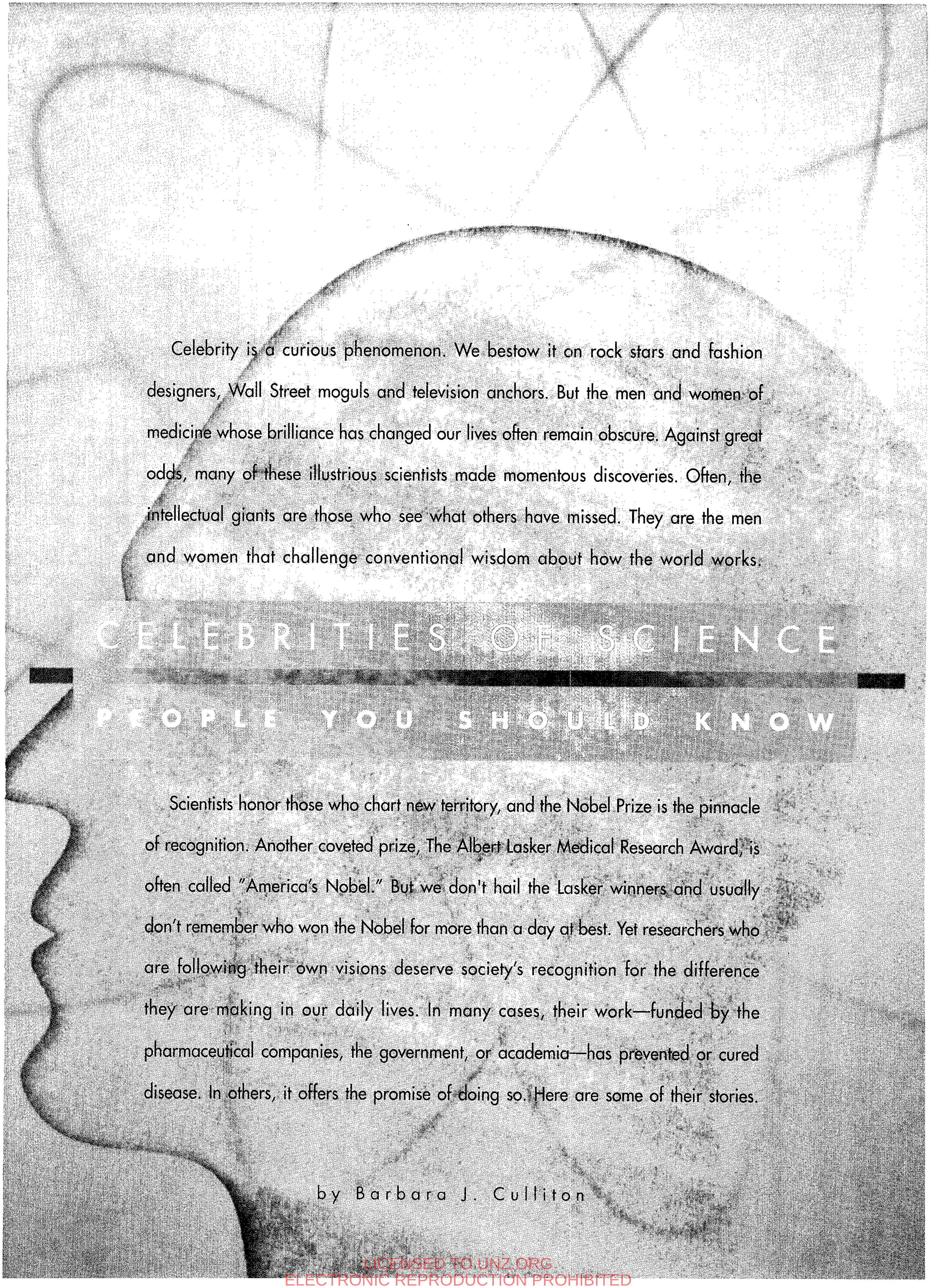
Sometimes a studio releases pictures at the end of the year in a last-minute attempt to jack up its revenues. "Studios get anxious about the fourth quarter," the producer Brian Grazer told me. "'Kindergarten Cop' came out at Christmas, and it did O.K., but I'd wanted it to come out in summer."

In December, a big picture desperately needs a big box-office take its first weekend, not just to maximize self-fulfilling buzz but to avoid being shunted off to second- and third-rate venues. At this time of year, Grazer said, studios "spend more money and make more mistakes." "The Postman," which looks like one of this season's bombs-to-be ("Costner only finished shooting the day before yesterday," a Hollywood veteran joked), was running TV ads a full six weeks before opening. "There's so much advertising the cacophony gets crazy," says Sid Ganis, a former top executive at Sony and Paramount. "The marketing becomes less effective—it's paralyzing to the consumer."

Last December, almost all the grand studio dramas failed with audiences (including "The Portrait of a Lady," "The Evening Star," "In Love and War," and "Ghosts of Mississippi"), and for two Christmases in a row expensive movies have been commercially less reliable. Yet here we are, beginning a December thick with expensive films and big, glorious dramas.

Until tickets are sold, marketing movies resembles military planning from another century, with armies (flacks, stars) and matériel (advertising, spools of film) committed many months in advance. Then, suddenly, it's total war, over in a flash. "Titanic," "Tomorrow Never Dies," and DreamWorks' big special-effects comedy "MouseHunt," for instance, all open the weekend before Christmas—almost four hundred million dollars' worth of movies premièring on a single Friday, their fates a settled issue by Saturday night. "You cannot imagine how terrifying it is," said Nora Ephron, whose last two movies came out in December, one a big hit, the other not.

Why do these auteurs subject themselves to such magnificent and gratuitous self-brutalization? Wouldn't "Kundun" have had a better chance in, say, October? It may be that after struggling so long and hard to become successful, to get movies made, the filmmakers thrive on the high-stakes, long-odds adrenaline. It's a form of Russian roulette—and in this awful version the gun has only one or two empty chambers.♦



Celebrity is a curious phenomenon. We bestow it on rock stars and fashion designers, Wall Street moguls and television anchors. But the men and women of medicine whose brilliance has changed our lives often remain obscure. Against great odds, many of these illustrious scientists made momentous discoveries. Often, the intellectual giants are those who see what others have missed. They are the men and women that challenge conventional wisdom about how the world works.

CELEBRITIES OF SCIENCE

PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Scientists honor those who chart new territory, and the Nobel Prize is the pinnacle of recognition. Another coveted prize, The Albert Lasker Medical Research Award, is often called "America's Nobel." But we don't hail the Lasker winners and usually don't remember who won the Nobel for more than a day at best. Yet researchers who are following their own visions deserve society's recognition for the difference they are making in our daily lives. In many cases, their work—funded by the pharmaceutical companies, the government, or academia—has prevented or cured disease. In others, it offers the promise of doing so. Here are some of their stories.

by Barbara J. Culliton

Dear Friends,

Highlighted in these pages are some of the true heroes fighting for America's future. We face a common foe; disease and disability threaten our daily lives and bring suffering to our loved ones. Yet medical research promises improved treatments and cures.

Current strains on the Federal budget threaten a strong medical research priority. Without an enlarged funding commitment, we will not have the weapons to protect our nation. There is no better investment in our national defense; our greatest challenge could be viruses that we are unable to conquer. Our nation cannot defend itself without vaccines, antibiotics, and new therapies to insure a healthy citizenry.

As the chairman of Funding First—an initiative to support medical research in honor of Mary Woodard Lasker—I ask you to join me and our scientists in urging our leaders to make medical research our nation's highest priority.

Mark O. Hatfield
Former U.S. Senator from Oregon

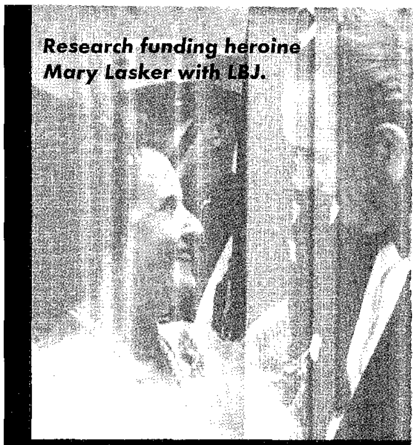
HE WHO LAUGHED LAST

M. Judah Folkman is blessed with the gift of intuition. Undeterred by "conventional wisdom" when it contradicted his imagination, Dr. Folkman generated a new approach to treating cancer that is directed not at the cancer cell itself but at the blood vessels that feed tumors. "The cells that line blood vessels put out a host of proteins or 'growth factors' to which tumors are attracted like junkies," says Folkman. "If you can deprive the tumor of its favorite protein, you can starve the cancer without harming healthy cells the way normal chemotherapy does." This is a remarkable and once ridiculed idea that is now being tested in recurrent or metastatic cancer. Based on Folkman's work, experiments with unique tumor-suppressing drugs (angiostatins) will be soon ready for breast, colon, prostate, and other cancer trials; Folkman is collaborating with Bristol-Myers Squibb and EntreMed. A number of other pharmaceutical companies are joining the race to bring the drug to the medical marketplace in the next few years.

Folkman's life as a cancer researcher began in the sixties when, as a young surgeon, he was studying the behavior of cells in glass chambers filled with artificial blood. One experiment was on skin cancer or melanoma. "In the laboratory dish I saw masses of tiny black dots—melanoma cells that all stopped growing at exactly the same size. When I transplanted these tiny tumors into live mice, the melanoma suddenly started growing like mad." Recalling an old theory about "angiogenesis" (from the Greek "angio" for vessel and "genesis" for growth), Folkman concluded that the melanoma cells were sending out a signal to attract capillaries. Tumors, he reasoned, can't grow or spread without their own supply of life-giving blood. "Clearly I was on to something," he says. "But everyone laughed. They said I was crazy, that tumors don't grow blood vessels as if they were a lifeline."

As a thirty-four-year old surgeon, Folkman became one of Harvard's youngest tenured professors. And lucky it was, because his position gave him the freedom to pursue angiogenesis when he wasn't in the operating room. Many of his grant requests to the National Institutes of Health initially met with rejection. "They said, 'Your conclusions about what you see reach way beyond the evidence you have.' I borrowed the line used by other scientists before me and said, 'No, it's just that we can understand a lot from a little.'" It took ten long years before Folkman and his colleagues proved that angiogenesis was real. People stopped laughing once elusive grants from the NIH and scientific honors flowed in.

But acceptance by the medical establishment did not spoil Judah Folkman and he remains an iconoclast. Just within the past few years, Folkman pursued a hunch that led to the discovery of angiogenesis's biological opposite, angiostatin—a molecule that tumors also produce but one that suppresses blood vessel growth. "It is completely counterintuitive that tumors make one protein that makes them grow and one that stops them from spreading, but it's true," says Folkman. "Cured" breast cancer is one case where angiostatin may be important. "A woman has surgery and chemotherapy and, for ten years, the tumor is gone. Then, suddenly, there is a recurrence. Why?" Folkman asks. "Perhaps because she had just enough residual tumor putting out anti-tumor angiostatin to keep any metastases in check. Then, for some reason we don't understand, the angiostatin runs out and the tumor comes back." The scientist in Folkman is all for understanding why this happens. But, in the meantime, Folkman the physician will settle for doing something about angiostatins.

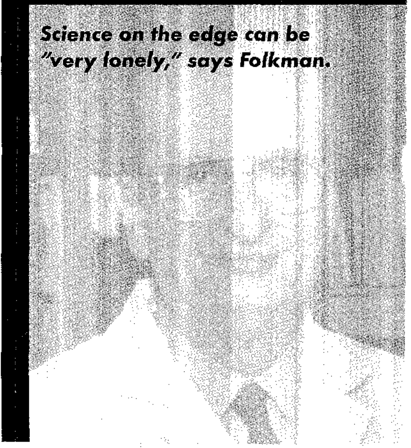


Research funding heroine Mary Lasker with LBJ.

FILE UNDER BEST KEPT SECRETS: THE LASKER AWARDS

Folkman was the kind of researcher that philanthropist Mary Woodard Lasker would have approved of. Her husband, Albert, was a pioneer in the advertising business back in the thirties, and, after his death, she used his small fortune to promote her belief that research can cure disease. A friend of presidents and congressmen, movie stars and columnists, and an activist before the word was even fashionable, Mary Lasker created the Albert Lasker Medical Research Award in 1944, on her late husband's birthday, to honor him and to let Americans know who the heroes of medicine are. Nearly half of the Albert Lasker basic research award winners have subsequently gone on to win the Nobel Prize.

Creating the prestigious award did not end Mary Lasker's efforts on behalf of medicine. By dint of the sheer force of her personality, she persuaded President Richard Nixon to launch the "War on Cancer" at the National Cancer Institute in 1971 and, two years later, convinced Congress to nearly double the budget of what is now the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Unlike the scientists she championed, she was not so much a risk taker as a woman who liked to bet on a sure thing—the efficacy of medical research. Mary Lasker died in 1994 at the age of 93, but her legacy lives on.



Science on the edge can be "very lonely," says Folkman.

Cover Photo: © Tony Stone Images/Chris Thomadakis
This page: (top) courtesy of the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation; (bottom) © Lori DeSantis

In The Search For Cures, All Things Are Possible.

More than 50,000 pharmaceutical company researchers are waging an all-out fight against diseases like cancer, heart attack, stroke, AIDS and Alzheimer's. We join "Celebrities of Science" in lauding those researchers whose brilliance, commitment and tenacity are turning hopes into breakthrough medicines, ideas into cures.

America's Pharmaceutical Companies

Leading the Way in the Search for Cures

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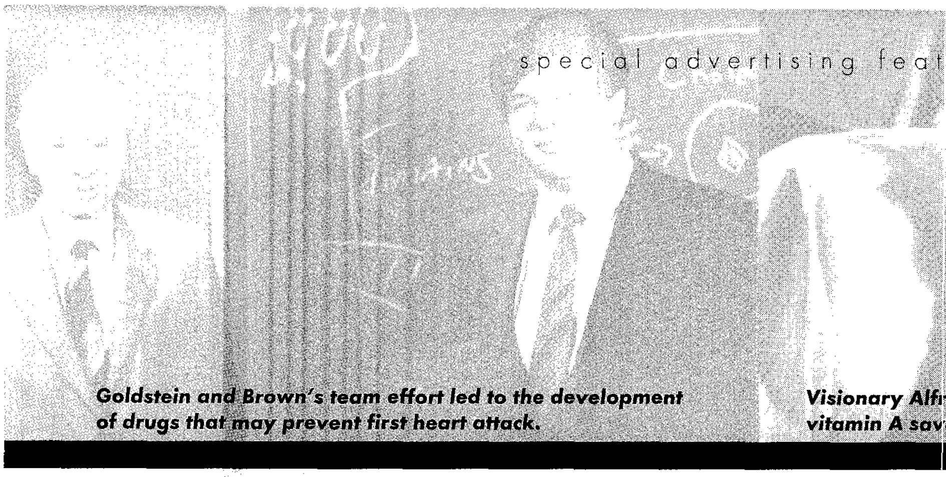
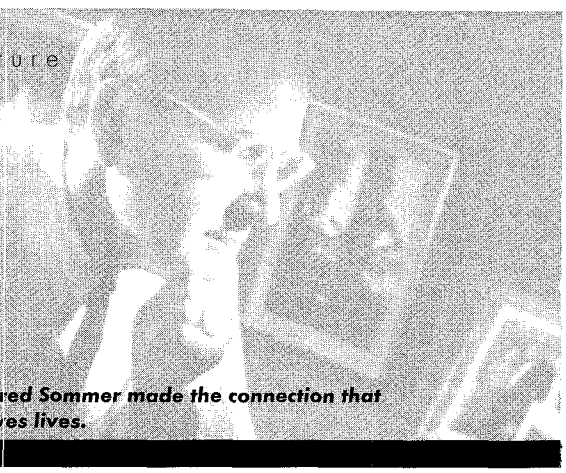


Goldstein and Brown's team effort led to the development of drugs that may prevent first heart attack.



Visionary Alfred Sommer made the connection that vitamin A saves lives.

THE CHOLESTEROL CONTROVERSY: TWO ON THE MONEY

A great debate raged in medical circles in the late sixties and early seventies about the role of cholesterol in heart disease. Many scientists reasoned that a high-fat diet clogged the arteries and must surely contribute to heart attacks and strokes. Others argued that because so many Americans who dined on high-fat foods had apparently healthy hearts, cholesterol might be just a scape goat. Still others believed that hereditary factors played the most significant role. The issue was clarified when two physician-scientists, Michael S. Brown and Joseph L. Goldstein of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, were treating children who had heart attacks before the age of ten. They discovered that the kids' arteries were as full of cholesterol deposits as those of fifty-year-old beef-eating men. The two scientists were, as Goldstein says, "determined to find out why these children had heart disease. Obviously it was not from a lifetime of eating fat."

Soon, Brown and Goldstein identified the gene that controls special receptors on the surface of the liver and other body cells that *remove the "bad" cholesterol (or LDL) before it has a chance to wreak havoc in blood vessels. None of the children with early heart* disease had the gene needed to break down the LDL cholesterol. In 1985, Brown and Goldstein won the Lasker Award for discovering the mechanisms that control cholesterol metabolism, and that same year they shared the Nobel Prize.

The work of Brown and Goldstein had very practical results; it spurred intense research in the pharmaceutical industry to design drugs that lower blood cholesterol by acting on the cholesterol receptors the two researchers had identified. Familiar drugs like Lipitor®, Mevacor®, Pravachol®, and Zocor® inhibit the production of cholesterol and increase cholesterol receptors, thereby lowering blood cholesterol levels in millions of patients who have already had one heart attack and are trying to prevent another. Very recent studies show that these drugs—as well as newer versions of them that are now in the pharmaceutical pipeline—may be even more useful than the *heart specialists thought. Just last month, researchers reported that these drugs also reduce the chances that people with only mildly* elevated LDL levels will have a heart attack at all.

LEAP OF FAITH

The Lasker tradition of honoring those who fight against the odds was upheld this year when the jury, now chaired by Goldstein, gave the medical research award to Dr. Alfred Sommer, an ophthalmologist and epidemologist, who is now dean of the School of Hygiene and Public Health at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Sommer was honored for his astonishing discovery that vitamin A can save malnourished children in the third world from infections that routinely kill them before they are old enough to go to school. An *enthusiastic world traveler, Sommer did his initial vitamin A studies in Indonesia.* Remarkably, when he requested funds to try to replicate his studies in other Asian and African nations, the prestigious National Research Council recommended that his project not be funded. Luckily, the United States Agency for International Development didn't listen, and the work went forward.

Sommer likes to say that his momentous discovery proves Louis Pasteur's belief that "Chance favors the prepared mind." Early in the nineteen-seventies, he joined a public health team headed for Bangladesh, where a cyclone had killed half a million people. Sommer's sojourn, which he describes as "extraordinary," led him to publish one of the very first papers on the epidemiology of a natural disaster. His interest in epidemiology paid off later in his career when Sommer and his colleagues studied 4,600 children in rural Indonesia for more than a year and a half. Some showed signs of xerophthalmia, a condition leading to blindness, while others did not. It was well known that vitamin A deficiency was associated with xerophthalmia and that lots of children with the affliction died young, but "No one made much of this connection because poverty, serious infection, and death were so common." Then one night, in a rural guest house, while analyzing data that showed what happened to kids who got vitamin A versus those who did not, "Suddenly I saw it. It was one of those rare eureka moments," Sommer says. Children with mild but untreated eye disease were dying much more frequently than children with normal eyes. Vitamin A was not only preventing blindness, it was saving lives.

Sommer and his colleagues had to confirm the vitamin A hypothesis in South Africa, Tanzania, Nepal, and several other countries before the public health community finally believed his simple observation. Today, the World Health Organization and others endorse vitamin A supplements (at four cents a pill) for children in all developing countries. Sommer is now collaborating with doctors in Nepal to see whether giving vitamin A to pregnant women will make their babies healthier at birth.

Photos left to right: courtesy of Drs. Michael S. Brown and Joseph L. Goldstein; courtesy of Dr. Alfred Sommer

LivingProof

that medical breakthroughs bring miraculous recoveries

Rita was on the national waiting list for seven months. "Before my transplant in 1993, I had a hard time walking across the room. Now I hold a full-time job, help my husband with his business, and look forward to walking my dog every evening. And, another miracle - just a few months ago we had a baby. Life is full...again. I have so many people to thank, and so much to look forward to."

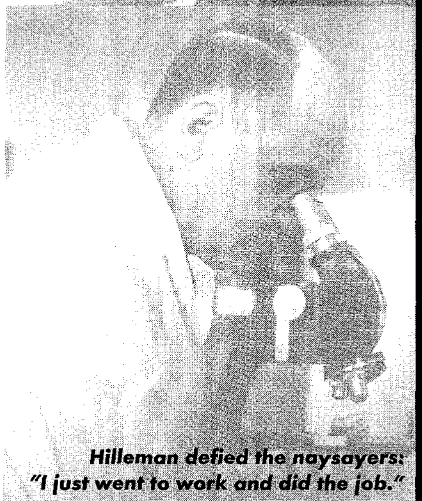
Rita Pearson got her life back, because someone cared enough to donate a kidney and an innovative treatment was available to prevent her body from rejecting the transplant.

After surgery Rita received a Roche drug that prevents rejection following kidney transplants. Roche has become an industry leader in transplant medicine and is researching new therapies that could lead to further advances in this critically important field. We're also working to heighten public awareness of the urgent need for organ donations so that more people can experience recoveries like Rita's.

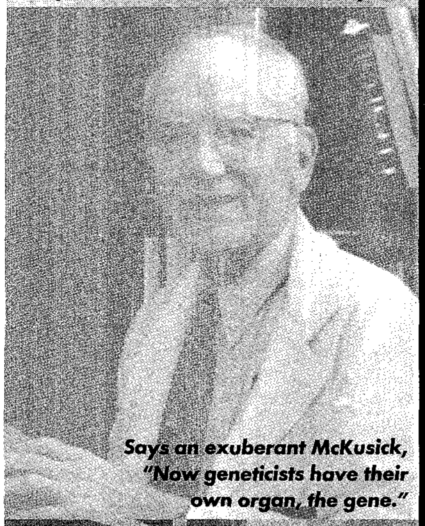
Our products. Our people. Making a world of difference.

Roche

Sommer examines an Indonesian child.



Hilleman defied the naysayers: "I just went to work and did the job."



Says an exuberant McKusick, "Now geneticists have their own organ, the gene."

King's latest triumph is finding a gene for deafness.

THE VACCINE MERLIN

Another scientist whose perseverance has made a major difference is Maurice Hilleman, a tall, slender, soft-spoken man who hails from the Big Sky country of Montana. "I was reared to work like hell and live by the tenets of Martin Luther," he recalls, as if it is a well-worn line that gives him pleasure. Hilleman, who *thinks* microbes, has had a lifelong fascination with viruses. Because of Hilleman and his colleagues, we have vaccines against measles, mumps, and rubella—diseases which used to kill children by the thousands.

Hilleman's career took place primarily in industry, in the laboratories of Merck & Co., who have consistently backed him despite an early debacle. Hilleman went to Merck in 1957 to start a major program in virus research. His assignment was to produce the Salk polio vaccine on a large scale. Just as it was ready for the market, Hilleman detected a monkey virus called SV_{40} in the polio vaccine and the whole batch had to be scrapped. "It was a total bust," admits Hilleman. But he reinstated himself in the good graces of Merck, first with the measles vaccine, and then with the vaccine for mumps. The latter was developed in part from blood drawn from his own daughter, Jeryl Lynn, who conveniently came down with mumps at the time. Subsequently, Hilleman pushed the creation of a combined measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine, despite the fact that naysayers said it couldn't be done. "I said 'bull,' and went to work," says Hilleman. "Kids were getting too many sticks with the needle and parents didn't like it. We needed a combination vaccine and we got it."

Something of a genius at vaccine design, Hilleman's work also led to the development of a Hepatitis B vaccine. These days, Hilleman spends his time thinking about a vaccine for another mutating virus—the one that causes AIDS.

THE BIRTH OF MEDICAL GENETICS

Today, genetics is one of the hottest topics in medicine. But until a young physician at Johns Hopkins began studying people with diseases that run in families, medical genetics did not exist. "As a student, I was fascinated by the discovery that genes are made of DNA, and by Watson and Crick's double helix, and that the correct number of human chromosomes is forty-six," says Dr. Victor A. McKusick. While at Tufts in Boston he read a news article about The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and decided to apply. "I was anxious to get on with it," says McKusick, who was so smart he was snapped up by Hopkins before he even had a college degree. That was more than fifty years ago.

As a young cardiologist, McKusick met young men with Marfan syndrome. "They were tall and skinny, with disproportionately long arms, long bony fingers, and bad hearts. They were often fond of athletics and many died young." He saw a pattern and wondered whether their abnormal bones and skeletons were inherited.

In 1957, McKusick became head of Hopkins's new division of medical genetics (one of the first in the world) and he was on his way. Every time he saw a patient, he asked about their relatives. Soon McKusick got the idea for a book, "Mendelian Inheritance in Man" (so named for Gregor Mendel, a nineteenth-century Austrian monk who, through the study of peas, figured out patterns of genetic inheritance from parent to progeny). When the book came out in 1966, it listed 1,500 conditions thought to be caused by genetic defects. Today, the revised book lists some 9,000 gene-related diseases and is considered the geneticist's bible. "It's on-line now, and we update it weekly," McKusick notes with pride. "Geneticists now have their own organ, the gene, just the way cardiologists have the heart, and orthopedists have the bones."

Like others for whom medicine and life are one, McKusick gets as excited about a new tidbit garnered from science as he did when he first walked into Hopkins half a century ago. If you see him walking down the hall there, you're likely to be greeted with the latest scientific news flash. "Have you heard about the link between Stargardt's disease and macular degeneration," he asked this reporter recently. McKusick collects scientific facts with as much exuberance as an eight-year-old collecting Mickey Mantle baseball cards.

GENE FOR BREAST CANCER

"For years I was the only one at genetics meetings talking about breast cancer," says Mary-Claire King. She was one of the first to suspect that breast cancer can arise when an aberrant gene is activated by something in the environment or diet, allowing tumor cells to multiply. But her colleagues found it hard to believe that a disease as complex as breast cancer could be triggered by a single gene. King's thinking was influenced by the so-called "two-hit" hypothesis that says cancer develops not from a single biological misfortune but from two that build on each other. "It made sense," says King. "If you are born with a gene for breast cancer, that's the first hit. You're more vulnerable than other women when a second hit, whatever it is, comes along."

Photos top to bottom: courtesy of the Lasker Foundation; courtesy of Dr. Maurice Hilleman/Merck & Co.; courtesy of Dr. Victor A. McKusick and The Baltimore Sun; © Mary Levin

You don't give
Isaac Newton
a million dollars
and tell him
which tree
to sit under.

You don't give
Ben Franklin
a million dollars
and say, "Quit flying
kites and get back
to work."

You don't give
Charles Darwin
a million dollars
and tell him to
cut the
monkey business.

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gives medical researchers
millions of dollars,
and doesn't ask them to do a thing.

Since 1977, the Bristol-Myers Squibb Unrestricted Biomedical Research Grants program has donated $68 million to 145 world-leading medical institutions, so researchers can use the money exactly as they choose. Bristol-Myers Squibb believes adventurous experimentation can lead to the greatest breakthroughs. So, there are no strings attached. Instead, every year, when we give these grants in six areas of research - neuroscience, orthopaedics, cardiovascular and related metabolic diseases, nutrition, infectious diseases and cancer - all we attach is hope.

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As a geneticist, she knew that breast cancer runs in families, and she diligently collected genetic data on women whose mothers, grandmothers, or sisters had the disease too. By literally looking at their cells chromosome by chromosome under the microscope, King finally saw a pattern. The women with inherited breast cancer had a genetic anomaly physically located somewhere in the middle of chromosome number 17. King stood up at the next annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics in Cincinnati in 1990 and said she was certain that the breast cancer gene was located somewhere on chromosome 17. It was sensational talk. Within days, geneticists around the world stopped what they were doing and joined the hunt in what became a tense race. In August 1994, a team in Utah found BRCA-1, the first breast cancer gene, thereby beating King to the "Holy Grail." Although she lost the race, it was Mary-Claire King who put genes for breast cancer on the map, and it is she who continues to lead the crusade for breast cancer research.

King's passion for helping has shaped her entire career. A feminist and single mother, she is a woman whose character of steel was forged by the terror in Argentina after the fall of Perón's government. One of the few researchers in the nineteen-seventies with the genetic know-how to identify *Los Desperacidos* ("the disappeared ones"), King was drawn into the chaos by attempting to match Argentine children to their living relatives. (The children had been adopted by strangers after their parents had been brutally murdered.) "It was very hard work back then, trying to use DNA to prove the relationship between a child and her biological grandmother. And it was even harder to sit in one of those military courts testifying before the very people who had stolen the children from their families in the first place," King says. "Just being there taught me the meaning of fear. Nothing in America could ever frighten me the way that did."

VIRUSES, THE ULTIMATE PARASITE

If success is often a story of persistence in the face of disbelief, few stories are as illustrative as that of Robert C. Gallo, one of the only scientists to ever win a Lasker twice. In 1982 he was acknowledged for his discovery of the first human RNA tumor virus, and in 1986 for determining that a retrovirus now known as HIV-1 causes AIDS.

As a young physician-scientist, he went to work for the National Cancer Institute. "I was around lots of people who were finding tumor viruses in animals and I just couldn't believe that tumor viruses didn't exist in people too," says Gallo, who believed that a class of retroviruses known to cause cancer in animals (particularly chickens) also caused cancer in people. But his colleagues believed with equal certainty that this class of viruses, now known as retroviruses, did not exist in humans.

Shortly before he proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that human retroviruses exist, Gallo received one of those classic letters of rejection from a scientific journal—the kind you save for posterity. In 1980, the *Journal of Virology* rejected Gallo's paper on a cancer-causing retrovirus saying, "there is little point in perpetuating this controversy." But Gallo's persistence paid off with more definitive data a year later, and that, in turn, was providential when the human immunodeficiency virus came along. Armed with years of experience studying this special class of viruses made the identification of HIV all that much easier and hastened the development of a blood test for AIDS by Gallo's laboratory. He is now heading his own Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland, and is working on a cure for AIDS.

NEVER LET SLEEPING DOGMAS LIE*

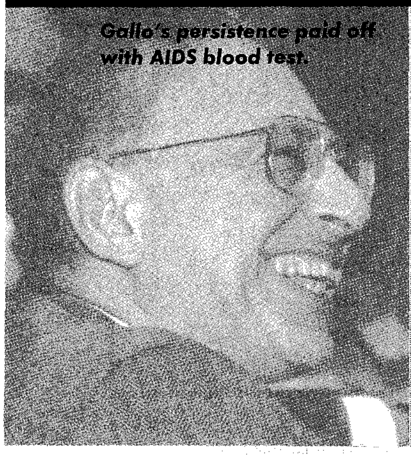
Gallo's success probably would not have been possible without the bold work of two virologists who discovered an enzyme that permits RNA to instruct DNA to make proteins instead of the other way around. The late Howard Temin had argued for a decade that cancer is initiated by what he called "protoviruses," with a core of RNA that is somehow activated to become a tumor. "But my data weren't all that convincing," Temin admitted, "and the idea that RNA could be in charge went against the central dogma that things go from DNA to RNA to protein." When Temin finally presented incontrovertible evidence in 1970 at a World Cancer Congress in Houston, the room was nearly empty.

Quite independently, David Baltimore at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also believed that RNA could initiate the production of proteins. Baltimore was working on animal viruses, and a postdoctoral fellow named Alice Huang (who later became his wife) brought a horse- and cattle-infecting virus to his laboratory. Baltimore recognized an enzyme in the virus that led him to his discovery of the reverse transcriptase enzyme. "I was working on a hunch," says Baltimore. "I wasn't thinking about the central dogma. I was wondering whether RNA could direct and store genetic information in DNA." Baltimore was aware of Temin's protovirus hypothesis, and when he found reverse transcriptase, he called Temin immediately. That's when he learned that Temin had found it too.

Temin won the Lasker Award in 1974. A year later, he and Baltimore shared the Nobel Prize for proving the existence of reverse transcriptase, an enzyme in retroviruses that have RNA, rather than DNA, at their core. The human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, is a retrovirus.

* Bertrand Russell

Photos left to right: © Bill McAllen Photography; © Svenskt Pressfoto; courtesy of Caltech/Bob Paz; © Tony Stone Images/Alan Thornton



Gallo's persistence paid off with AIDS blood test.

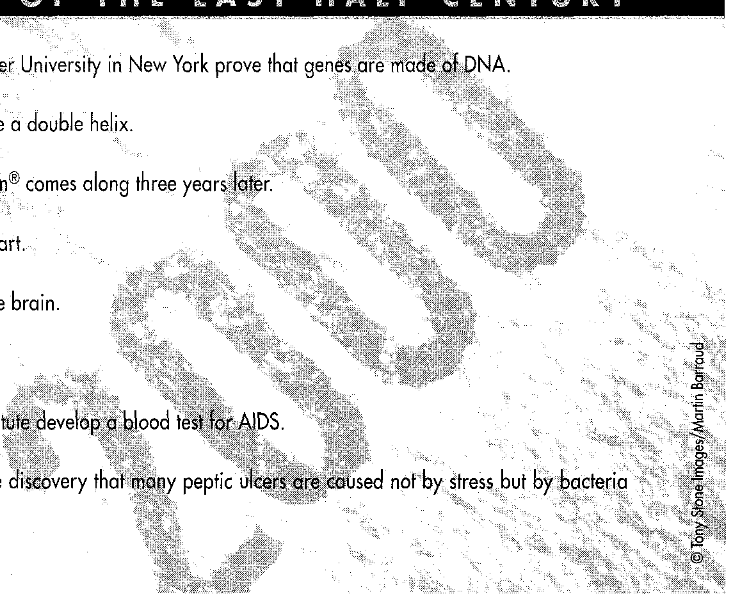
Temin and Baltimore's discovery was central to the development of the biotech industry.

Hello "Dolly"!

We often worry that the pace of medical progress is too slow, when we witness the crippling decline or death of friends and family from life's cruel diseases. Researchers feel the same frustration. We read about success, not failure, but nearly every scientist whose work bears fruit has had to live through barren periods. But the celebrities of science selected here all had a streak of persistence that kept them from giving up on their visions. It is worth remembering, though, that persistence alone is not enough. Our best scientists take risks, and it is their risk-taking capacity that needs to be supported.

(Washington D.C.-based writer Barbara J. Culliton is the founding editor of Nature Medicine *magazine, and is now editor-designate of the* Journal of Investigative Medicine. *She's also the Times Mirror Visiting Professor of writing at The Johns Hopkins University.)*

SOME RESEARCH DISCOVERIES OF THE LAST HALF-CENTURY



© Tony Stone Images/Martin Barraud

1944	Oswald Avery, Colin MacLeod, and Maclyn McCarty at Rockefeller University in New York prove that genes are made of DNA.
1953	James D. Watson and Francis Crick show that DNA is shaped like a double helix.
1960	Leo H. Sternbach develops Librium® at Hoffmann-LaRoche; Valium® comes along three years later.
1967	South African surgeon Christian Barnard transplants a human heart.
1973	Solomon H. Snyder and colleagues discover natural opiates in the brain.
1981	Physicians diagnose AIDS in young men.
1984	Robert C. Gallo and Mikulas Popovic at the National Cancer Institute develop a blood test for AIDS.
1985	Australian physician, Barry Marshall, astounds medicine with the discovery that many peptic ulcers are caused not by stress but by bacteria that can be treated with antibiotics.
1987	Prozac®, the first antidepressant that acts on the neurochemical called serotonin, is marketed by Eli Lilly.
1989	Francis S. Collins of the University of Michigan, and Jack Riordan and Lap-Chee Tsui of the University of Toronto are the first to isolate the gene for cystic fibrosis.
1990	W. French Anderson, Michael Blaese and Steven Rosenberg conduct the first experiment in human gene therapy at the National Institutes of Health.
1992	Taxol®, which is derived from the bark of the Yew tree, is approved for treating refractory ovarian cancer. It is marketed by Bristol-Myers Squibb and approved for breast cancer two years later.
1997	Ian Wilmut and his colleagues in Scotland clone "Dolly," a sheep.
	Pill for impotence, Viagra®, is close to receiving FDA approval.
	NIH places its seal of approval on efficacy of acupuncture.
????	Scientists clone the first human being.

Anyone can get HIV. Everyone should be able to fight back.

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At your age, with your high cholesterol, what's your risk of a first heart attack?

If you have high cholesterol, figure your risk of a first heart attack.

Fill in your points for each risk factor.

☐ **Age: Men**
0 pts. Less than 35 2 pts. 40 to 48 4 pts. 54+
1 pt. 35 to 39 3 pts. 49 to 53

☐ **Age: Women**
0 pts. Less than 42 2 pts. 45 to 54 4 pts. 74+
1 pt. 42 to 44 3 pts. 55 to 73

☐ **Family History:**
2 pts. My family has a history of heart disease or heart attacks before the age of 60

☐ **Inactive Lifestyle:**
1 pt. I rarely exercise or do anything physically demanding

☐ **Weight:**
1 pt. I'm more than 20 lbs. over my ideal weight

☐ **Smoking:**
1 pt. I'm a smoker

☐ **Diabetic:**
1 pt. Male Diabetic
2 pts. Female Diabetic

☐ **Total Cholesterol Level:**
0 pts. Less than 240 mg/dL
1 pt. 240 to 315 mg/dL
2 pts. More than 315 mg/dL

☐ **HDL Level (good cholesterol):**
0 pts. 39 to 59 mg/dL
1 pt. 30 to 38 mg/dL
2 pts. Under 30 mg/dL
-1 pt. Over 60 mg/dL

☐ **Blood Pressure:**
I don't take blood pressure medication; my blood pressure is:
(*Use your top or higher blood pressure number*)
0 pts. Less than 140 mmHg
1 pt. 140 to 170 mmHg
2 pts. Greater than 170 mmHg
(or)
1 pt. I am currently taking blood pressure medication

☐ **Total Points**

If you scored 4 points or more, you could be at above average risk of a first heart attack compared to the general adult population. The more points you score, the greater your risk.

If you have already had a heart attack or have heart disease, your heart attack risk is significantly higher. **Only your doctor can evaluate your risk and recommend treatment plans to reduce your risk.** If you don't know your cholesterol level or blood pressure, ask your doctor if your levels should be checked.

Provided as an educational service from Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.

American Heart Association℠
Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke

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PRAVACHOL, in combination with diet, is proven to reduce the risk of a first heart attack, reduce the risk of death from heart disease, and reduce the need for surgery to clear blocked coronary arteries (such as bypass or angioplasty) based on a landmark study including over 6,500 males with high cholesterol and no evidence of heart disease. Because PRAVACHOL is a prescription drug, you should ask your doctor or healthcare professional if PRAVACHOL is right for you. Some mild side effects, such as slight rash or stomach upset, occur in about 2–4% of patients.

PRAVACHOL®

Proven to help prevent first heart attacks in people with high cholesterol.

PRAVACHOL is the only cholesterol-lowering drug of its kind proven to help prevent first heart attacks. And the grim fact is, up to 33% of people do not survive their first heart attack. Improving your diet and exercise is an important first step, but may not be enough. So ask your doctor about PRAVACHOL. It reduces the risk of a first heart attack and the need for surgery to clear blocked coronary arteries. PRAVACHOL has been prescribed by doctors for millions of men and women worldwide. It could help you live a longer, healthier life.

Ask your doctor if PRAVACHOL is right for you. Or call **1-800-PREVENT** for information on *first heart attack prevention* including a free brochure from the American Heart Association. It's all provided by Bristol-Myers Squibb.

PRAVACHOL®
pravastatin sodium 20 mg tablets

Proven to help prevent first heart attacks.

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PRAVACHOL should not be taken by women who are pregnant or nursing, people who are allergic to any of its ingredients or by anyone with liver disease. Your doctor may perform simple blood tests to check your liver function before and during treatment with PRAVACHOL. Muscle pain or weakness could be a sign of a rare but serious side effect and should be reported to your doctor right away. Be sure your doctor knows about other medications you may be taking in order to avoid any possible serious drug interactions. Please see important information on the next page.

PRAVACHOL®

Pravastatin Sodium Tablets

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Hypersensitivity to any component of this medication. Active liver disease or unexplained, persistent elevations in liver function tests (see **WARNINGS**). *Pregnancy and lactation.* Atherosclerosis is a chronic process and discontinuation of lipid-lowering drugs during pregnancy should have little impact on the outcome of long-term therapy of primary hypercholesterolemia. Cholesterol and other products of cholesterol biosynthesis are essential components for fetal *development (including synthesis of steroids and cell membranes). Since HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors decrease cholesterol* synthesis and possibly the synthesis of other biologically active substances derived from cholesterol, they may cause fetal harm when administered to pregnant women. Therefore, HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are contraindicated during pregnancy and in nursing mothers. **Pravastatin should be administered to women of childbearing age only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards.** *If the patient becomes pregnant while taking this* class of drug, therapy should be discontinued and the patient apprised of the potential hazard to the fetus.

WARNINGS: Liver Enzymes: HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, like some other lipid-lowering therapies, have been associated with biochemical abnormalities of liver function. Increases of serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values to more than 3 times the *upper limit of normal occurring on 2 or more (not necessarily sequential) occasions have been reported in 1.3% of patients* treated with pravastatin in the US over an average period of 18 months. These abnormalities were not associated with cholestasis and did not appear to be related to treatment duration. In those patients in whom these abnormalities were believed to be related to pravastatin and who were discontinued from therapy, the transaminase levels usually fell slowly to pretreatment levels. These biochemical findings are usually asymptomatic although worldwide experience indicates that anorexia, weakness, and/or abdominal pain may also be present in rare patients. In the largest long-term placebo-controlled clinical trial with pravastatin (Pravastatin Primary Prevention Study; See **Clinical Pharmacology**), the overall incidence of AST and/or ALT elevations to greater than three times the upper limit of normal was 1.05% in the pravastatin group as compared to 0.75% in the placebo group. One (0.03%) pravastatin-treated patient and 2 (0.06%) placebo-treated patients were discontinued because of transaminase elevations. Of the patients with normal liver function at week 12, three of 2875 treated with pravastatin (0.10%) and one of the 2919 placebo patients (0.03%) had elevations of AST greater than three times the upper limit of normal on two consecutive measurements and/or discontinued due to elevations in transaminase levels during the 4.8 years (median treatment) of the study. **It is recommended that liver function tests be performed prior to and at 12 weeks following initiation of therapy or the elevation of dose.** Patients who develop increased transaminase levels or signs and symptoms of liver disease should be monitored with a second liver function evaluation to confirm the finding and be followed thereafter with frequent liver function tests until the abnormality(ies) return to normal. Should an increase in AST or ALT of three times the upper limit of normal or greater persist, withdrawal of pravastatin therapy is recommended. Active liver disease or unexplained transaminase elevations are contraindications to the use of pravastatin (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). Caution should be exercised when pravastatin is administered to patients with a history of liver disease or heavy alcohol ingestion (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics/Metabolism**). Such patients should be closely monitored, started at the lower end of the recommended dosing range, and titrated to the desired therapeutic effect. **Skeletal Muscle: Rare cases of *rhabdomyolysis with acute renal failure secondary to myoglobinuria have been reported with pravastatin and other* drugs in this class.** Uncomplicated myalgia has also been reported in pravastatin-treated patients (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). Myopathy, defined as muscle aching or muscle weakness in conjunction with increases in creatine phosphokinase (CPK) values to greater than 10 times the upper normal limit, was rare (< 0.1%) in pravastatin clinical trials. Myopathy should be considered in any patient with diffuse myalgias, muscle tenderness or weakness, and/or marked elevation of CPK. Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever. **Pravastatin therapy should be discontinued if markedly elevated CPK levels occur or myopathy is diagnosed or suspected. Pravastatin therapy should also be temporarily withheld in any patient experiencing an acute or serious condition predisposing to the development of renal failure secondary to rhabdomyolysis, e.g., sepsis; hypotension; major surgery; trauma; severe metabolic, endocrine, or electrolyte disorders; or uncontrolled epilepsy.** The risk of myopathy during treatment with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor is increased with concurrent therapy with either erythromycin, cyclosporine, niacin, or fibrates. However, neither myopathy nor significant increases in CPK levels have been observed in three reports involving a total of 100 post-transplant patients (24 renal and 76 cardiac) treated for up to two years concurrently with pravastatin 10-40 mg and cyclosporine. Some of these patients also received other concomitant immunosuppressive therapies. In one single-dose study, pravastatin levels were found to be increased in cardiac transplant patients receiving cyclosporine. Further, in clinical trials involving small numbers of patients who were treated concurrently with pravastatin and niacin, there were no reports of myopathy. Also, myopathy was not reported in a trial of combination pravastatin (40 mg/day) and gemfibrozil (1200 mg/day), although 4 of 75 patients on the combination showed marked CPK elevations versus one of 73 patients receiving placebo. There was a trend toward more frequent CPK elevations and patient withdrawals due to musculoskeletal symptoms in the group receiving combined treatment as compared with the groups receiving placebo, gemfibrozil, or pravastatin monotherapy (see **PRECAUTIONS: Drug *Interactions*). *The use of fibrates alone may occasionally be associated with myopathy. The combined use of* pravastatin and fibrates should be avoided unless the benefit of further alterations in lipid levels is likely to outweigh the increased risk of this drug combination.**

PRECAUTIONS: General: Pravastatin may elevate creatinine phosphokinase and transaminase levels (see **ADVERSE *REACTIONS***). *This should be considered in the differential diagnosis of chest pain in a patient on therapy with pravastatin. Homozygous Familial Hypercholesterolemia.* Pravastatin has not been evaluated in patients with rare homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia. In this group of patients, it has been reported that HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are less effective because the patients lack functional LDL receptors. *Renal Insufficiency.* A single 20 mg oral dose of pravastatin was *administered to 24 patients with varying degrees of renal impairment (as determined by creatinine clearance). No effect was* observed on the pharmacokinetics of pravastatin or its 3α-hydroxy isomeric metabolite (SQ 31,906). A small increase was seen in mean AUC values and half-life (t½) for the inactive enzymatic ring hydroxylation metabolite (SQ 31,945). Given this small sample size, the dosage administered, and the degree of individual variability, patients with renal impairment who are receiving pravastatin should be closely monitored. **Information for Patients:** Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever. **Drug Interactions:** *Immunosuppressive Drugs, Gemfibrozil, Niacin (Nicotinic Acid), Erythromycin:* See **WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle**. *Antipyrine:* Since concomitant administration of pravastatin had no effect on the clearance of antipyrine, interactions with other drugs metabolized via the same hepatic cytochrome isozymes are not expected. *Cholestyramine/Colestipol:* Concomitant administration resulted in an approximately 40 to 50% decrease in the mean AUC of pravastatin. However, when pravastatin was administered 1 hour before or 4 hours after cholestyramine or 1 hour before colestipol and a standard meal, there was no clinically significant decrease in bioavailability or therapeutic effect. (See **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Concomitant Therapy**.) *Warfarin:* In a study involving 10 healthy male subjects given pravastatin and warfarin concomitantly for 6 days, bioavailability parameters at steady state for pravastatin (parent compound) were not altered. Pravastatin did not alter the plasma protein-binding of warfarin. Concomitant dosing did increase the AUC and Cmax of warfarin but did not produce any changes in its anticoagulant action (i.e., no increase was seen in mean prothrombin time after 6 days of concomitant therapy). However, bleeding and extreme prolongation of prothrombin time has been reported with another drug in this class. Patients receiving warfarin-type *anticoagulants should have their prothrombin times closely monitored when pravastatin is initiated or the dosage of pravastatin* is changed. *Cimetidine:* The $AUC_{0\text{-}12\,hr}$ for pravastatin when given with cimetidine was not significantly different from the AUC for pravastatin when given alone. A significant difference was observed between the AUC's for pravastatin when given with cimetidine compared to when administered with antacid. *Digoxin:* In a crossover trial involving 18 healthy male subjects given pravastatin and digoxin concurrently for 9 days, the bioavailability parameters of digoxin were not affected. The AUC of pravastatin tended to increase, but the overall bioavailability of pravastatin plus its metabolites SQ 31,906 and SQ 31,945 was not altered. *Cyclosporine:* Some investigators have measured cyclosporine levels in patients on pravastatin, and to date, these results indicate no clinically meaningful elevations in cyclosporine levels. In one single-dose study, pravastatin levels were found to be increased in cardiac transplant patients receiving cyclosporine. *Gemfibrozil:* In a crossover study in 20 healthy male volunteers given concomitant single doses of pravastatin and gemfibrozil, there was a significant decrease in urinary excretion and protein binding of pravastatin. In addition, there was a significant increase in AUC, Cmax, and Tmax for the pravastatin metabolite SQ 31,906. Combination therapy with pravastatin and gemfibrozil is generally not recommended. In interaction studies with *aspirin, antacids* (1 hour prior to PRAVACHOL), *cimetidine, nicotinic acid,* or *probucol*, no statistically significant differences in bioavailability were seen when PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) was administered. *Other Drugs:* During clinical trials, no noticeable drug interactions were reported when PRAVACHOL was added to: diuretics, antihypertensives, digitalis, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, beta-blockers, or nitroglycerin. **Endocrine Function:** HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors interfere with cholesterol synthesis and lower circulating cholesterol levels and, as such, might theoretically blunt adrenal or gonadal steroid hormone production. Results of clinical trials with pravastatin in males and post-menopausal females were inconsistent with regard to possible effects of the drug on basal steroid hormone levels. In a study of 21 males, the mean testosterone response to human chorionic gonadotropin was significantly reduced ($p < 0.004$) after 16 weeks of treatment with 40 mg of pravastatin. However, the percentage of patients showing a ≥ 50% rise in plasma testosterone after human chorionic gonadotropin stimulation did not change significantly after therapy in these patients. The effects of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors on spermatogenesis and fertility have not been studied in adequate numbers of patients. The effects, if any, of pravastatin on the pituitary-gonadal axis in pre-menopausal females are unknown. Patients treated with pravastatin who display clinical evidence of endocrine dysfunction should be evaluated appropriately. Caution should also be exercised if an *HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor or other agent used to lower cholesterol levels is administered to patients also receiving other* drugs (e.g., ketoconazole, spironolactone, cimetidine) that may diminish the levels or activity of steroid hormones. **CNS Toxicity:** CNS vascular lesions, characterized by perivascular hemorrhage and edema and mononuclear cell infiltration of perivascular spaces, were seen in dogs treated with pravastatin at a dose of 25 mg/kg/day, a dose that produced a plasma drug level about *50 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking 40 mg/day. Similar CNS vascular lesions have been observed with* several other drugs in this class. A chemically similar drug in this class produced optic nerve degeneration (Wallerian degeneration of retinogeniculate fibers) in clinically normal dogs in a dose-dependent fashion starting at 60 mg/kg/day, a dose that produced mean plasma drug levels about 30 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking the highest recommended dose (as measured by total enzyme inhibitory activity). This same drug also produced vestibulocochlear Wallerian-like degeneration and retinal ganglion cell chromatolysis in dogs treated for 14 weeks at 180 mg/kg/day, a dose which resulted in a mean plasma drug level similar to that seen with the 60 mg/kg/day dose. **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility:** In a 2-year study in rats fed pravastatin at doses of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg body weight, there was an increased incidence of hepatocellular carcinomas in males at the highest dose ($p < 0.01$). Although rats were given up to 125 times the human dose (HD) on a mg/kg body weight basis, serum drug levels were only 6 to 10 times higher than those measured in humans given 40 mg pravastatin as measured by AUC. The oral administration of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg (producing plasma drug levels approximately 0.5 to 5.0 times the human drug levels at 40 mg) of pravastatin to mice for 22 months resulted in a statistically significant increase in the incidence of malignant lymphomas in treated females when all treatment groups were pooled and compared to controls ($p < 0.05$). The incidence was not dose-related and male mice were not affected. A chemically similar drug in this class was administered to mice for 72 weeks at 25, 100, and 400 mg/kg body weight, which *resulted in mean serum drug levels approximately 3, 15, and 33 times higher than the mean human serum drug concentration* (as total inhibitory activity) after a 40 mg oral dose. Liver carcinomas were significantly increased in high-dose females and mid- and high-dose males, with a maximum incidence of 90 percent in males. The incidence of adenomas of the liver was significantly increased in mid- and high-dose females. Drug treatment also significantly increased the incidence of lung adenomas in mid- and high-dose males and females. Adenomas of the eye Harderian gland (a gland of the eye of rodents) were significantly higher in high-dose mice than in controls. No evidence of mutagenicity was observed *in vitro*, with or without rat-liver metabolic activation, in the following studies: microbial mutagen tests, using mutant strains of *Salmonella typhimurium* or *Escherichia coli*; a forward mutation assay in L5178Y TK +/- mouse lymphoma cells; a chromosomal aberration test in hamster cells; and a gene conversion assay using *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. In addition, there was no evidence of mutagenicity in either a dominant lethal test in mice or a micronucleus test in mice. In a study in rats, with daily doses up to 500 mg/kg, pravastatin did not produce any adverse effects on fertility or general reproductive performance. However, in a study with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, there was decreased fertility in male rats treated for 34 weeks at 25 mg/kg body weight, although this effect was not observed in a subsequent fertility study when this same dose was administered for 11 weeks (the entire cycle of spermatogenesis, including epididymal maturation). In rats treated with this same reductase inhibitor at 180 mg/kg/day, seminiferous tubule degeneration (necrosis and loss of spermatogenic epithelium) was observed. Although not seen with pravastatin, two similar drugs in this class caused drug-related testicular atrophy, decreased spermatogenesis, spermatocytic degeneration, and giant cell formation in dogs. The clinical significance of these findings is unclear. **Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category X.** *See* ***CONTRAINDICATIONS****. Safety in pregnant women has not been established. Pravastatin was not* teratogenic in rats at doses up to 1000 mg/kg daily or in rabbits at doses of up to 50 mg/kg daily. These doses resulted in 20x (rabbit) or 240x (rat) the human exposure based on surface area ($mg/meter^2$). However, in studies with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, skeletal malformations were observed in rats and mice. There has been one report of severe congenital *bony deformity, tracheo-esophageal fistula, and anal atresia (Vater association) in a baby born to a woman who took another* HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor with dextroamphetamine sulfate during the first trimester of pregnancy. PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) should be administered to women of child-bearing potential only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards. If the woman becomes pregnant while taking PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium), it should be discontinued and the patient advised again as to the potential hazards to the fetus. **Nursing Mothers:** A small amount of pravastatin is excreted in human breast milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, women taking PRAVACHOL should not nurse (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). **Pediatric Use:** Safety and effectiveness in individuals less than 18 years old have not been established. Hence, treatment in patients less than 18 years old is not recommended at this time.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: Pravastatin is generally well tolerated; adverse reactions have usually been mild and transient. In 4-month long placebo-controlled trials, 1.7% of pravastatin-treated patients and 1.2% of placebo-treated patients were discontinued from treatment because of adverse experiences attributed to study drug therapy; this difference was not statistically significant. In long-term studies, the most common reasons for discontinuation were asymptomatic serum transaminase increases and mild, non-specific gastrointestinal complaints. During clinical trials the overall incidence of adverse events in the elderly was not different from the incidence observed in younger patients. **Adverse Clinical Events:** All adverse clinical events (regardless of attribution) reported in more than 2% of pravastatin-treated patients in the placebo-controlled trials are identified in the table below; also shown are the percentages of patients in whom these medical events were believed to be related or possibly related to the drug:

	All Events		**Events Attributed to Study Drug**	
Body System/Event	***Pravastatin (N = 900) %***	***Placebo (N = 411) %***	***Pravastatin (N = 900) %***	***Placebo (N = 411) %***
Cardiovascular				
Cardiac Chest Pain	4.0	3.4	0.1	0.0
Dermatologic Rash	4.0*	1.1	1.3	0.9
Gastrointestinal				
Nausea/Vomiting	7.3	7.1	2.9	3.4
Diarrhea	6.2	5.6	2.0	1.9
Abdominal Pain	5.4	6.9	2.0	3.9
Constipation	4.0	7.1	2.4	5.1
Flatulence	3.3	3.6	2.7	3.4
Heartburn	2.9	1.9	2.0	0.7
General				
Fatigue	3.8	3.4	1.9	1.0
Chest Pain	3.7	1.9	0.3	0.2
Influenza	2.4*	0.7	0.0	0.0
Musculoskeletal				
Localized Pain	10.0	9.0	1.4	1.5
Myalgia	2.7	1.0	0.6	0.0
Nervous System				
Headache	6.2	3.9	1.7*	0.2
Dizziness	3.3	3.2	1.0	0.5
Renal/Genitourinary				
Urinary Abnormality	2.4	2.9	0.7	1.2
Respiratory				
Common Cold	7.0	6.3	0.0	0.0
Rhinitis	4.0	4.1	0.1	0.0
Cough	2.6	1.7	0.1	0.0

*Statistically significantly different from placebo.

In the Pravastatin Primary Prevention Study (West of Scotland Coronary Prevention Study) (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Clinical Studies**) involving 6595 patients treated with PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) (N = 3302) or placebo (n = 3293) the adverse event profile in the pravastatin group was comparable to that of the placebo group over the median 4.8 years of the study. The following effects have been reported with drugs in this class; not all the effects listed below have necessarily been associated with pravastatin therapy: *Skeletal:* myopathy, rhabdomyolysis, arthralgia. *Neurological:* dysfunction of certain cranial *nerves (including alteration of taste, impairment of extra-ocular movement, facial paresis), tremor, vertigo, memory loss,* paresthesia, peripheral neuropathy, peripheral nerve palsy, anxiety, insomnia, depression. *Hypersensitivity Reactions:* An apparent hypersensitivity syndrome has been reported rarely which has included one or more of the following features: anaphylaxis, angioedema, lupus erythematous-like syndrome, polymyalgia rheumatica, dermatomyositis, vasculitis, purpura, *thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, hemolytic anemia, positive ANA, ESR increase, eosinophilia, arthritis, arthralgia, urticaria,* asthenia, photosensitivity, fever, chills, flushing, malaise, dyspnea, toxic epidermal necrolysis, erythema multiforme, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome. *Gastrointestinal:* pancreatitis, hepatitis, including chronic active hepatitis, cholestatic jaundice, fatty change in liver, and, rarely, cirrhosis, fulminant hepatic necrosis, and hepatoma; anorexia, vomiting. *Skin:* alopecia, pruritus. A variety of skin changes (e.g., nodules, discoloration, dryness of skin/mucous membranes, changes to hair/nails) have been reported. *Reproductive:* gynecomastia, loss of libido, erectile dysfunction. *Eye:* progression of cataracts (lens opacities), ophthalmoplegia. *Laboratory Abnormalities:* elevated transaminases, alkaline phosphatase, and bilirubin; thyroid function abnormalities. **Laboratory Test Abnormalities:** Increases in serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values and CPK have been observed (see **WARNINGS**). Transient, asymptomatic eosinophilia has been reported. Eosinophil counts usually returned to normal despite continued therapy. Anemia, thrombocytopenia, and leukopenia have been reported with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors. **Concomitant Therapy:** Pravastatin has been administered concurrently with cholestyramine, colestipol, nicotinic acid, probucol and gemfibrozil. Preliminary data suggest that the addition of either probucol or gemfibrozil to therapy with lovastatin or pravastatin is **not** associated with greater reduction in LDL-cholesterol than that achieved with lovastatin or pravastatin alone. No adverse reactions unique to the combination or in addition to those previously reported for each drug alone have been reported. Myopathy and rhabdomyolysis (with or without acute renal failure) have been reported when another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor was used in combination with immunosuppressive drugs, gemfibrozil, erythromycin, or lipid-lowering doses of nicotinic acid. Concomitant therapy with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors and these agents is generally not recommended. (See ***WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle*** and ***PRECAUTIONS: Drug Interactions***.)

OVERDOSAGE: To date, there are two reported cases of overdosage with pravastatin, both of which were asymptomatic and not associated with clinical laboratory abnormalities. If an overdose occurs, it should be treated symptomatically and supportive measures should be instituted as required.

CAUTION: Federal (USA) law prohibits dispensing without prescription.

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

LEARNING TO RUN

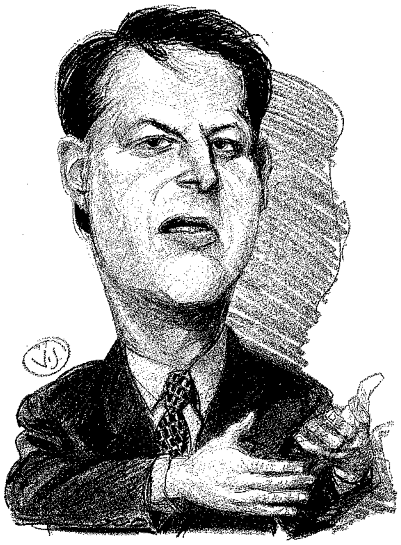
The Vice-President is a man of contradictory parts. Will they add up to the next President?

BY JOE KLEIN

A FEW weeks ago, I spent a rather strange hour with Albert Gore, Jr., the Vice-President of the United States, in his White House office. It came at the end of a long day, in the midst of a dispiriting week: two days earlier, the Clinton Administration had suffered its most significant defeat of the second term, losing the battle over "fast-track" trade legislation in the House of Representatives. The opposition had been led by the Vice-President's old Democratic rival for the Presidential nomination, Representative Richard Gephardt, of Missouri. Then Clinton and Gore had been questioned—separately, simultaneously—by Justice Department lawyers investigating the ravenous fund-raising practices of the 1996 Clinton-Gore reëlection campaign. This was part of a continuing agony for the Vice-President—the first time his integrity had ever been questioned. "I think it's worn him down a bit," one of Gore's friends told me. "I mean, this is a guy who would probably have turned himself in at St. Albans"—the private school that Gore attended in Washington—"if he'd done something wrong and it went undetected."

In any case, I was expecting a serious conversation with the Vice-President—and, intermittently, it was that. But it was also, and far more memorably, a rowdy and tumultuous session: Gore repeatedly cracked jokes at his own expense (and mine), dissolved into laughter, came to the brink of tears once, allowed a bit of personal bitterness to seep out, and also hinted at some of his reservations about the lot of a professional politician. In fairness, I must admit, I started it.

"I brought a prop," I told him as we shook hands. I pulled a three-by-five card from my pocket with three words written on it:


Clinton is said to be worried that Gore will spoil the "New Democrat" legacy.

VICTOR JUHASZ

SMILE
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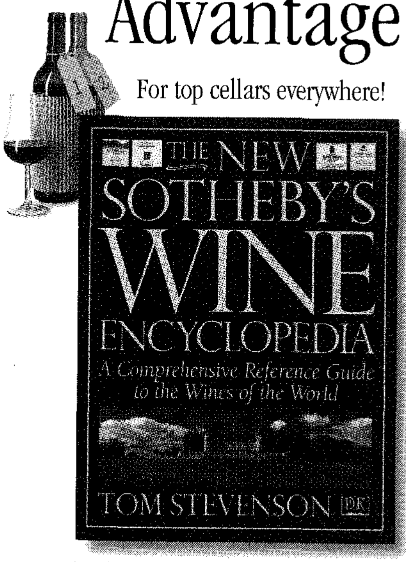
Gore laughed uproariously. "Where'd you get this?" he asked. His laugh comes out of a different place from the measured, proper voice that governs his public moments. He scrunches up his nose and eyebrows, and lets loose with a wild, infectious cackle. It is an impolitic laugh, and quite winning.

Years ago, Gore told me that his mother—who is as deft a politician as his father, the former senator from Tennessee—had given him a card with those three words on it before a multi-candidate debate early in the 1988 Presidential primaries. It was the best forensic advice I'd ever seen a candidate get, and Gore had made the most of it: he'd soared that night, skewering his opponents on defense policy. With similar skill, he demolished Ross Perot in their famous televised confrontation over free trade.

Debate is the perfect Gore forum: a structured setting that gives the appearance of spontaneity. It rewards creativity, but only within a context of discipline and preparation. The Vice-President has more trouble in unstructured public situations; he wasn't sure how to react when the Chinese suddenly produced cham-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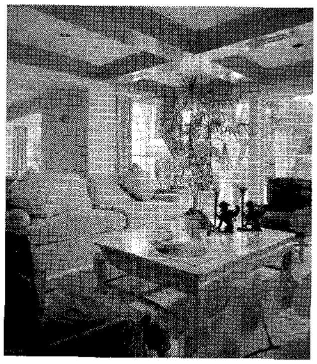
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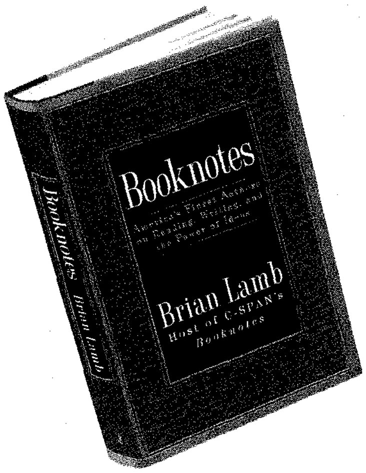
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Which author was interviewed for a presidential staff position in the White House barber shop?
See page 240

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pagne for a toast to celebrate the closing of a trade deal in Beijing last spring, for example. It is a difficulty that Bill Clinton, among others, has noticed. Clinton—the master of the spontaneous public gesture (and an unstinting supporter of his Vice-President)—once told aides that he wondered "how you could get so far in politics" and be as tone-deaf as Gore sometimes was when confronted with an unexpected situation, especially one that required an immediate emotional response.

As we sat down in two straight-backed chairs in his warm, bright office, I asked Gore whether it had been an awful year for him.

"An annus horribilis?" he asked. He sipped tea from a mug. "No. It's been a great year, dominated by Karenna's wedding and punctuated by the Marine marathon," which he had run a few weeks earlier with two of his daughters.

"How about professionally?" I asked.

"Well, for five minutes I may have been President," he replied, referring to a comic routine he uses in his stump speeches: he tells his audience that he was President for a few moments during the Inauguration last January, just before Bill Clinton was sworn in. With arch solemnity, he then recounts the various "achievements" of the Gore Presidency (3.1 new jobs created, and so forth). It's a funny bit, but I'd seen him do it six times in the past month.

"You don't want to hear it again?" he said, with a loose cackle. "Let me repeat . . ." he added, with mock formality, and then laughed again.

I struggled against the insistent tide of hilarity. It had to have been a pretty tough year. In early March, Bob Woodward revealed in a front-page story in the Washington *Post* that the Vice-President had made fund-raising phone calls from his office. This seemed a monumentally trivial violation, but Gore—and much of the Washington press corps—took it seriously. The next day, the Vice-President materialized in the White House pressroom and gave a disastrous press conference, in which he excused his actions by saying they were covered by "no controlling legal authority." That was probably true: the Pendleton Act, the law in question, had been passed—in 1883, when telephones were rare—to prevent officeholders from shaking down their employees for kickbacks; arguably, the law had nothing to do with making phone calls to hit up private citizens. But Gore repeated the phrase "no controlling legal authority" several times, whereupon it entered the lexicon of great rhetorical howlers perpetrated by public figures. It became his version of "I didn't inhale."

"My staff was unanimously against my going out there and doing that press conference," he said now. "They bear no responsibility."

Actually, Gore has a reputation for having a sharp eye, and ear, for political nonsense—in private. "He's extremely popular with the White House staff for that reason," Ron Klain, his chief of staff, says. "If someone's been in the paper saying something stupid, he'll joke about it in a direct, cutting way that the President never would."

I asked Gore what sort of abuse he'd visit upon an aide who got caught using a clunker like "no controlling legal authority." He shook his head in agreement and searched for an answer. "I wanted to make a clean breast of it," he said, slowing down, moving carefully, "and tell everything I did, and why, even at the risk of making some mistakes." Drifting back into giggles, he went on, "You know, to paraphrase the late Isaiah Berlin, 'The fox makes many little mistakes, the hedgehog makes one big one.' And that was one very big mistake."

But three weeks later he made a similar mistake with a group of reporters in China. It was one of the more bizarre performances ever given by a public official on a foreign trip. Gore had dashed into a makeshift pressroom at Qinhua University just before he was to deliver a major policy address. He had been disturbed by inaccurate—or perhaps just inconvenient—briefings that his staff had given the press regarding his conversations with Prime Minister Li Peng about allegations that the Chinese government had made illegal contributions to American political campaigns. He told the stunned reporters that he was speaking not "on the record" but "on background," as a "senior Administration official"; that is, they could not use his name. The non-Gore then offered another, tougher version of his conversation with Li. It was a startlingly clumsy performance, so unusual that several reporters felt compelled to reveal that the "senior Administration official" was indeed the Vice-President.

"Oh, I guess I had to get it out of my system," Gore said now, referring to his two pressroom disasters and lapsing into laughter again. "It worked so well the first time."

His insistent levity had begun to seem more nervous than charming. Reminiscing about his annus horribilis was probably not the most pleasant of topics, but the Vice-President had been warned in advance that it would be our subject. Gore seemed to be searching for the right public attitude to strike: something that wasn't defensive or rectitudinous; something casual. Unable to find anything comfortable, he retreated into the familiar: a standard recitation of the Administration's recent achievements, delivered on autopilot, in basic robo-Gorespeak, the lugubrious, vaguely patronizing, randomly italicized rhetorical molasses that many of his closest friends—among them, according to one account, his daughter Karenna—have begged him to avoid.

"Really, it's been a great year," he said, emerging from the recitation in a more natural tone of voice. "And there's one other victory I need to talk about." He picked up that day's Washington *Post*, which had a front-page headline about the growing "consensus" on global warming. "I've waited twenty years for this damn headline," he said. "And that didn't just happen. That is the result of an enormous amount of hard work."

GORE has been, by most accounts, an admirable and very effective Vice-President. Bill Clinton has sought his advice not just on "Gore" issues like global warming—one of the rare instances when Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin's position didn't carry the day—but also on matters of basic Washington strategy and politics. In fact, Gore has sometimes seemed more comfortable, and confident, as a No. 2 than as a public figure in his own right. But with Clinton's reëlection his role was wrenched in a very discomforting direction: the Vice-President is now, unavoidably, a candidate for President and, as such, a luscious target for the press and for a legion of rivals.

"I don't think we realized that it would happen so quickly," Tipper Gore told me. The Gores had always been treated respectfully by the press; the Vice-President assumed there was a reservoir of good will. "It was a different political environment from what he had expected," she went on, "but I guess that's what happens when some people are onto what they think is a big story. I think he's been terrific handling it."

Yet the gossip currently bubbling out of the White House is that Gore has grown more cautious during the past year. In the first term, the Vice-President consistently counselled boldness—"You've got to throw long" was his term of art—on issues ranging from Bosnia to deficit reduction and welfare reform. It was a moderate, New Democrat sort of boldness, challenging the more liberal Democratic Party interest groups. Now, it is said, he is thinking more about how those groups may respond to his prospective candidacy. He was relatively quiet during the free-trade debate; indeed, he didn't mention "fast-track" legislation—which gives the President greater power to negotiate international trade agreements without congressional interference—in a September speech to the notoriously protectionist A.F.L.-C.I.O. In an analogous situation four years earlier, he had stood up against a very cautious White House staff and insisted on taking on Ross Perot. Their debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement had made the issue a national one, rather than just another Beltway obscurity. It had made support of free trade more politically plausible for congressional Democrats, and it had unquestionably been Gore's most effective moment as Vice-President.

"I wish I could have done something like that this time," he told me.

"Why not debate Gephardt?" I asked.

"I'm not sure that that would have been great for the Democratic Party," he said.

But several close associates of the President and the First Lady say they were disappointed by Gore's performance on the trade issue, and are increasingly worried that the Vice-President might compromise their New Democrat

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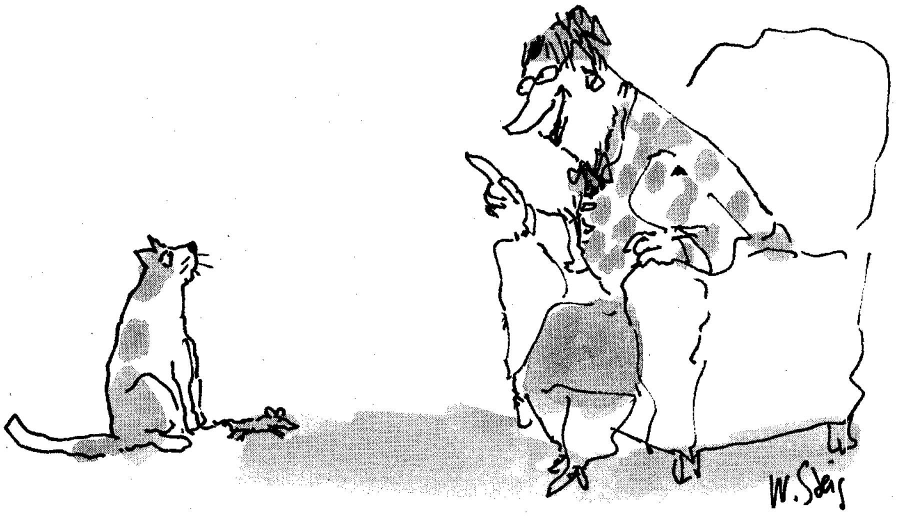


"How would you feel if the mouse did that to you?"

legacy to please the Democratic Party's liberal base. The First Lady is said to be particularly concerned. The victory of Tony Blair, whom she visited in England recently, convinced her that the New Democrat and New Labour tendencies represented a historic transatlantic development—a "third way" between traditional liberalism and conservatism, which her husband would receive credit for initiating, and which needs to be sustained. It is an ironic turn, given Gore's notorious steadfastness, and given Hillary Clinton's own lapses into traditional liberalism. But the victory of the Party's reactionary left wing on "fast-track" has made Clinton's effort to move the Democrats to the center seem suddenly more fragile.

Gore insisted to me that he has not grown cautious—that he is where he has always been on free trade and the rest. And he could prove it, he said. "If I may slide onto 'background' . . . Or am I being overly cautious?" He began to laugh, then saw me writing. "No, no, no. Don't write that," he said, with feigned horror. "You gotta think up your own lines, pal."

This begged the perennial Al Gore question: the difference between the stiff, public personage and the looser fellow who often wandered back to the press section of his airplane for off-the-record chats. Why couldn't the "public" Gore be more fun, like the "real" Gore the reporters saw?

"Oh, well, that's psychodrama," he said, deftly mimicking the therapeutic style. "I'm good at that." But he seemed disappointed, and he added, "Do you really want to ask that question?"

He had obviously answered it before. Public reserve was something he had learned from his father, he said. It was a proper old Tennessee tradition, and he was trying to overcome it. That was a nearly credible explanation, but there was one inconvenient detail: Albert Gore, Sr., may have been formal, in an old-fashioned, Southern sort of way, but he was in no way reserved. He was a garrulous, bombastic populist, who played the fiddle on the stump in his early days. "His father would always say 'Seventeen hundred and seventy-six'—he'd use six words when one would do," a longtime friend told me. "You will never catch Al talking like that. He doesn't want to overwhelm people with adjectives."

The psychological complexities of the public-versus-private question were something that Al Gore, Jr., had discussed for a brief time, after his son was struck, and nearly killed, by an automobile, in 1989. "Al went about studying his emotions, his personality, during that time the same way he studied something like global warming," another friend says. "There was an almost clinical intensity to it."

Gore latched on to a book by the Swiss psychotherapist Alice Miller entitled "The Drama of the Gifted Child." It was about the repressed anger of children toward their parents—especially children who had devoted their lives to achieving goals set by others. The Vice-President downplays the impact of the book on his life now, but he did recommend it to friends at the time, and those friends wondered about the meaning for Al Gore of passages like "Accommodation to parental needs often (but not always) leads to the 'as-if personality.' This person develops in such a way that he reveals only what is expected of him. . . . He cannot develop and differentiate his true self, because he is unable to live it."

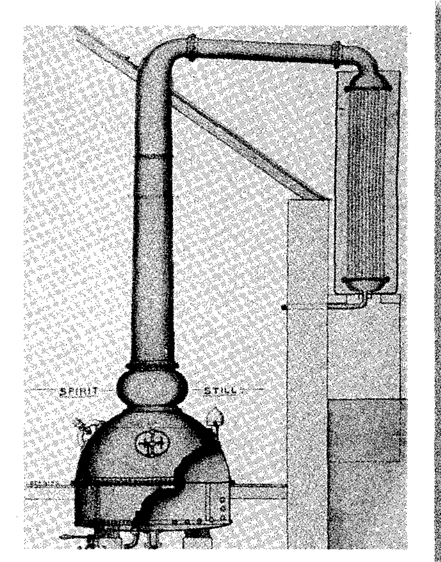
In a way, Gore is the rarest of baby-boom politicians: one of the few whose sense of politics wasn't shaped by the romantic mythology of John F. Kennedy. He grew up in Washington, mostly—summers were spent at the family farm in Carthage, Tennessee—and Kennedy was one of the many pols who dandled young Gore on their knee. He got to see the dim realities of politics up close, the sweat and baloney and blather of it. He saw his father's career destroyed because of the principled stand he took against the war in Vietnam. He spent a good seven years after graduating from Harvard—including two years' service in Vietnam, in part because he didn't want to damage his father's political fortunes—looking for something other than politics to do with himself. He worked as a journalist. He went to divinity school. He went to law school. He inhaled. And then he exhaled, and ran for his father's old congressional seat. Remarkably, he never found himself in a real political struggle along the way—except for his brief, unsuccessful but respectable trial run for president in 1988. After four terms in the House, he breezed into the Senate. Bill Clinton added him to his ticket in 1992 more for ballast than for his bravado. "He thinks about issues the same way we do," Clinton explained to his media strategist Mandy Grunwald on the day he made the choice. Clinton meant that Gore took issues seriously—that he didn't just take politically convenient positions, and he loved talking about complicated problems.

In that sense, the public Al Gore—the guy who loves to talk about ozone depletion—may be closer to the real thing than the jokey insider whom reporters often see in off-the-record situations, the giggler before me in the White House. This Gore appeared to be working a little too hard: his was the awkward informality of an incurably shy man. "He *is* shy," Tipper Gore said. "He's always been shy. He was reserved when he was a teen-ager."

A longtime and still devoted Gore staff member says, "When Bill Clinton wants to relax, he'll invite twenty friends in, play some hearts, talk about books. When Al wants to relax, he'll go off alone somewhere with his laptop. I think he has the potential to be a great leader, a visionary; he sees things before other people do. But I worry that he tends to make intellectual rather than emotional connections with people."

Many of the people who have worked closely with Gore over the years feel the same way. He can be distant, cold, hard to get to know. "It is easier to disagree with the President than with the Vice-President," a former Administration official told me. "When you disagree with Clinton, he'll engage you—he's curious, and, of course, he always wants to win you over. But Gore will just shut down."

ABOUT halfway through our hour together, I asked the Vice-President about one of his signature technological issues, the Midgetman missile. It was something he hadn't talked about in a while. But nuclear strategy had been the all-consuming foreign-policy discussion of the late seventies and early eighties—how the United States might prevent the Russians from destroying all our land-based missiles if they decided to launch a limited nuclear first strike. It was a question that had occupied entire think tanks and, needless to say, a thick wedge of the Pentagon. The most serious proposals were hilariously extravagant, but Gore supported a more modest, single-warhead missile called the Midgetman. (As a matter of rhetorical aesthetics, it is difficult to imagine Ronald Reagan, or even Bill Clinton, backing a weapon that sounds so eensy.) "It was one of the least bad solutions in a ridiculous conversation," Leslie H. Gelb, the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, said. "There was never any possibility of a *limited* first strike. I spent a good part of my life wrapped up in those scenarios, and in retrospect



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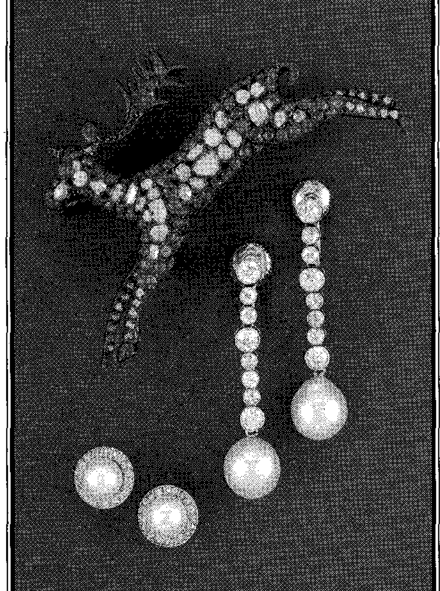

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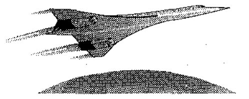

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I consider it a complete waste of time."

Gore's position was somewhat different. He agreed that trying to figure out how to counter a limited Russian first strike might have been ridiculous, but it was not a waste of time. "Oh, no. Breaking that psychological barrier was the key to resolving the arms race," he told me. "Want me to give you a quick, sixty-second recap of the issue?"

The recap went on for fifteen minutes, and it was extraordinary. "I studied this issue eight to ten hours a week for thirteen months," Gore began. He had changed, suddenly. He was engaged, enthusiastic. He went to the blackboard in his office—one of those white plastic things that you use Magic Marker on—and drew a metaphoric "diagram" of the nature of fear, which he said was crucial to understanding the Midgetman debate. He asked an aide to bring some plastic cups, which he used to demonstrate how putting fewer warheads on more missiles would bollix the Russians. It was not exactly a professorial lecture; he seemed more like the world's best Ph.D. student, attacking his orals. But there was no awkwardness about it: this was, palpably, the real Al Gore.

"He did that to Ted Kennedy once," a former Kennedy aide told me. "He came in for lunch, and he went into this endless thing about the Midgetman missile. Kennedy was rolling his eyes. What on earth was Gore thinking?"

The chances are that he wasn't thinking, certainly not in any political sense; he was simply enthused. I had walked into several of these Gore dissertations over the years: about the ozone layer (where he used a metal watchband as his prop); about the need to reform federal purchasing practices (using a government-regulation ashtray); about global warming; about the incredible power of computers that did parallel processing. They were, without doubt, his happiest, least encumbered moments in public life. He may be interested in issues in the same serious way that Clinton is, but he is not interested in the same sort of issues. He has rarely taken breakthrough positions on the immediate, emotional stuff of politics—issues like race and crime and taxes. He gravitates toward the sort of technological abstractions that most politicians resolutely avoid. I asked him why.

"I really don't know," he said. "But these issues do affect people's lives. People in Grand Forks, North Dakota, who had to move out of their homes because of the flooding don't think global climate change is such an abstraction anymore. There are fortunes made and lost on Wall Street every day because of developments in the information superhighway. That's not an abstraction. But I also think you're talking about a subset of my issues—they don't represent the whole set. We've been having conferences on 'family' issues for seven years in Tennessee. This government did a complete turnaround on tobacco, and I think I had something to do with that."

The story of his sister's death from lung cancer, which Gore discussed privately with the President long before he revealed it to the 1996 Democratic Convention and a national television audience, influenced Clinton's decision to move aggressively against the tobacco companies. Now, as we talked, the Vice-President became quietly emotional about his sister; his eyes grew red and misty. He had been hammered by the press when he gave the Convention speech; even a few of his advisers thought it was a bad idea, especially since it was quickly revealed that the Gore family had received federal subsidies for tobacco grown on their land for several years after his sister's death. When I asked Gore about this, he flared: "It was bullshit. People don't change immediately; there's a process of growth. But the press has these two categories—either you're a good guy in a white hat or you're a hypocrite. Human beings are more complex than that. My position on tobacco didn't change immediately, but it had been in place for years when I gave that speech: I had proposed getting rid of the subsidies when I was in Congress, I had proposed warning labels years before."

The press reaction to the Convention speech seemed, in retrospect, the beginning of his troubles. Even if Gore is exonerated in the campaign-finance imbroglio, as seems likely, he faces the prospect of more of the same. For the first four years of the Clinton Administration, the President was often compared unfavorably—with regard to personal discipline and probity—to his Vice-President; for the next few years, it may be Gore's turn to suffer by comparison. Bill Clinton was probably the best candidate for President of the late twentieth century. Gore will never be as good, and the reminders of that will be constant.

Some of the Vice-President's closest advisers are concerned about how he'll survive the ordeal. His greatest strengths—his sanity, his solid judgment, the intelligence he brings to complicated issues—are essential for a successful President, but they are not public strengths. His weaknesses are all too public. "But he'll work on the weaknesses and work on them, until he gets past them," says Carter Eskew, an old friend and occasional media adviser. "It's like one of those white basketball players who may not have the natural ability, but he has a lot of desire. He'll keep practicing the game until he's good enough to play." Still, it can be agonizing to watch Al Gore jump through the hoops of a profession he might not be suited for, in pursuit of an ambition that was chosen for him. He seems a decent, intelligent man. "A good man," says Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo, who has grown close to Gore in recent years. "I believe he really wants to do the right thing, and you'd be surprised how rare that is in this town."

It may be significant that not one of the several dozen Gore friends and staffers I spoke with thought that the Vice-President would have chosen to become a politician if his father hadn't been one, and hadn't so ardently wished for his son to be President. And neither did Gore when I asked him that question, as we came to the end of our hour.

"Probably not," he said. "I think I would have been a writer. I certainly rebelled against the idea of becoming a politician. I spent seven years as a journalist."

"Do you have doubts about the wisdom of your ultimate choice?" I asked.

"Huge numbers of people are influenced by what their parents do, and that certainly happened to me," he said. "But when I came back to politics I came back on my own terms. At least"—he smiled—"I thought I did."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Oh," he said, with an ironic twinkle. "I was just commenting on the persistent influence of childhood experience." ♦

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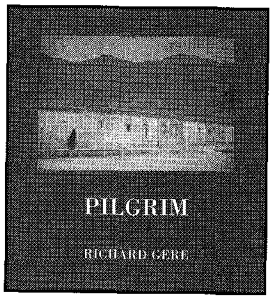

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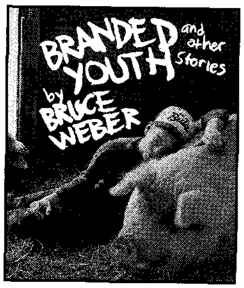

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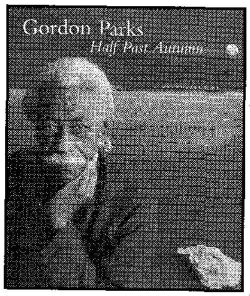

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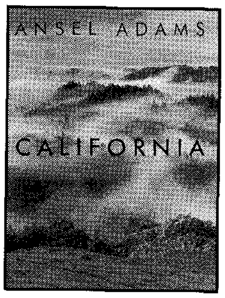

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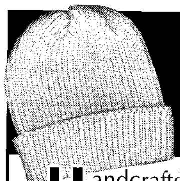

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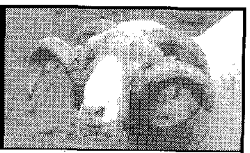

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WHEN FOUNTAINHEADS COLLIDE

Robert Irwin and Richard Meier tangle over the Getty Center's garden.

BY LAWRENCE WESCHLER

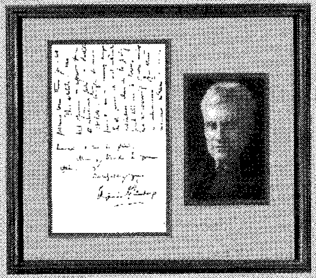
"GOT a few minutes?" Robert Irwin asked one bright afternoon late last winter as I climbed into the passenger seat of his gleaming black Cadillac, at L.A.X. airport. What he meant was more like "Got a few hours?" For in no time—having first stopped at a roadside doughnut stand for his perennially perfect Coke (ice crushed just right, syrup-soda ratio pitched exactly so)—we were coursing up the Pacific Coast Highway, catching up on old times and new doings. The latter came principally in two categories: his astonishment, at age sixty-eight, to be finding himself, for the first time, the besotted father of a three-year-old girl; and his almost equal astonishment at finding himself in charge of the single largest public-art commission of his (or just about any artist's) life—the Lower Central Gardens at the magisterial new Getty Center, currently taking shape astride a hilltop about five miles inland, with its vernissage set for this month.

It turned out to be the latter of these two passions that had set us on this particular wild-goose, or maybe I should say wild-grass, chase, for after about an hour's drive Irwin eased the Cadillac onto a dusty embankment so that we could gaze upon precisely that—a tuft of wild grass. "Amazing, isn't it?" Irwin marvelled. He proceeded to tell me how he had had his eye on that particular tuft for almost a year now—auditioning it, as it were, in different lights, across different seasons. "Some grasses," he explained, "you can come upon them in high season, when they're really on their game, and they're just humming. But you go back a couple of months later and they're simply gone. Or else they've fallen apart completely—a real mess. But then there are others, like this one, that even when they're down, the dry seedpods are still beautiful. The stalks can get this haunting, graceful, quite striking quality." He got out of the car, crouched in front of the dried tuft, ruffled its stalk spray, palmed its feathery plumes. "Yup," he said, smiling, as he climbed back into the car and happily negotiated a U-turn. The tuft seemed to have passed muster—it, along with more than a thousand other plant types that, Irwin now explained, he'd been subjecting to similarly rigorous seasonal inspections over the past several years as he ever so gradually, ever so painstakingly, pulled together the horticultural components of his garden palette.

I found myself thinking, as we now headed back toward town, how not that long ago Irwin had compressed his entire artistic practice—from his origins as a vigorous Abstract Expressionist, through an increasingly minimalist passion—down to the point where he was willing to declare that the way sunlight and shade played across an expanse of lawn had come to fulfill all his requirements for a work of art. And here he now was, just a few years later, effectively carving out that very tranche of grass, along with a myriad other scrupulously selected ground covers, and deploying them all around a garden project budgeted at more than eight million dollars.

The rigor—or, at any rate, the fixity of attention and the intensity of his ambition—runs all the way through, and all the way back. I recalled his stories of himself as a teen-ager, not twenty miles from there, in the Inglewood flatlands of Southwest L.A., where he divided his time between perfecting his technique as a champion swing dancer and perfecting the various cars in which he'd ferry himself to the nightly tournaments. How, for instance, he would fastidiously layer coat after coat of ruby-red maroon lacquer across the dashboard of his beloved '39 Ford—five coats, ten, twenty—until he'd got everything flawlessly cherry and just so. And then, one day, how his friend Keith, in a hurry to pry open the locked glove compartment, had jimmied the thing loose with a screwdriver, slipping up in the process and leaving a deep zigzag gash across the twenty coats of ruby-red maroon. Irwin almost killed the guy, and to this day each time he tells the story he concludes,

"The Sketch in the New Yorker...over-praised me in many ways."



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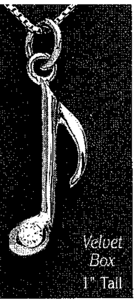
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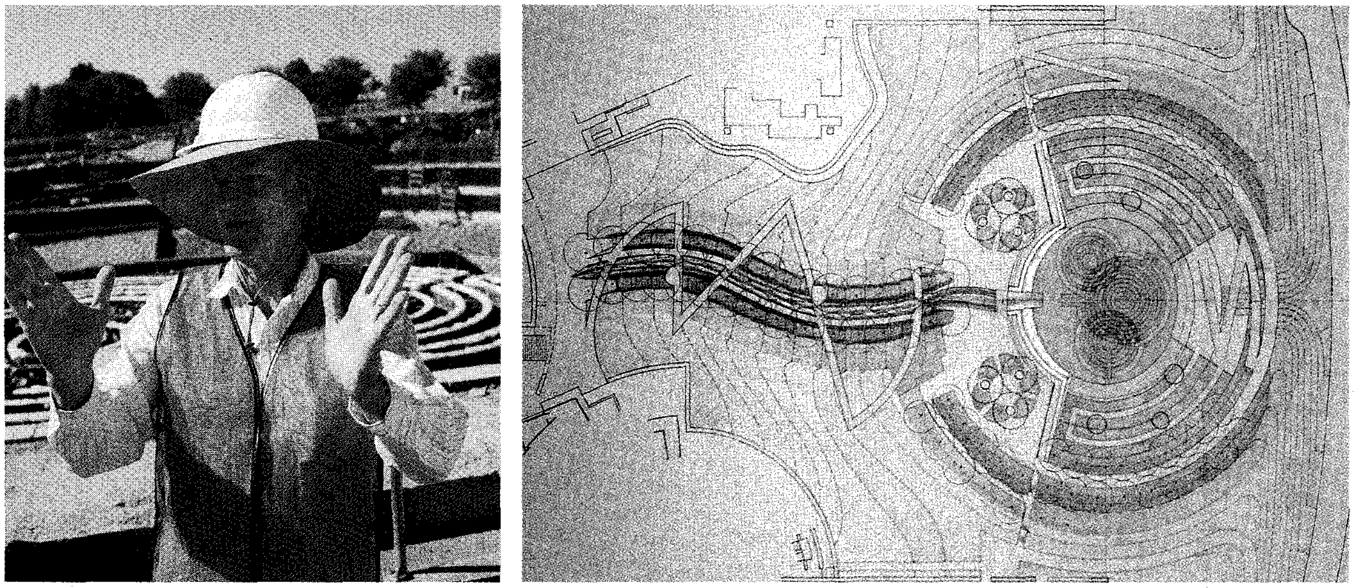
with fresh outrage, that he still can't get over it. "I mean, could *you*?" he asks. "I mean, how could a person *do* such a thing?"



Irwin photographed in the garden: His design so rankled the architect that a boundary line had to be drawn between the two projects.

LEFT: DENNIS HOPPER; RIGHT: COURTESY J. PAUL GETTY TRUST

ORIGINALLY, no one but the architect was supposed to get anywhere near the garden at the Getty Center—a nearly billion-dollar facility, which was being constructed from scratch, to house the Getty Museum and the trust's library, research center, administrative offices, and various other institutes. In 1984, the distinguished New York modernist Richard Meier, as part of his presentation during the semifinal round of the trust's competition for what was arguably going to be the premier architectural commission of the last quarter of this century, had stated, "In my mind's eye I see a classic structure, elegant and timeless, emerging, serene and ideal, from the rough hillside, a kind of Aristotelian structure within the landscape." And, indeed, Meier's scheme, which by the end of the year had won the competition, was determinedly Aristotelian, both in its rationalist, geometric rigor and in the unswerving unity with which that rigor carried all the way through: razor-straight lines and compass-perfect arcs melding the complex, disparate elements of the campus into a remarkable, often spectacular, whole.

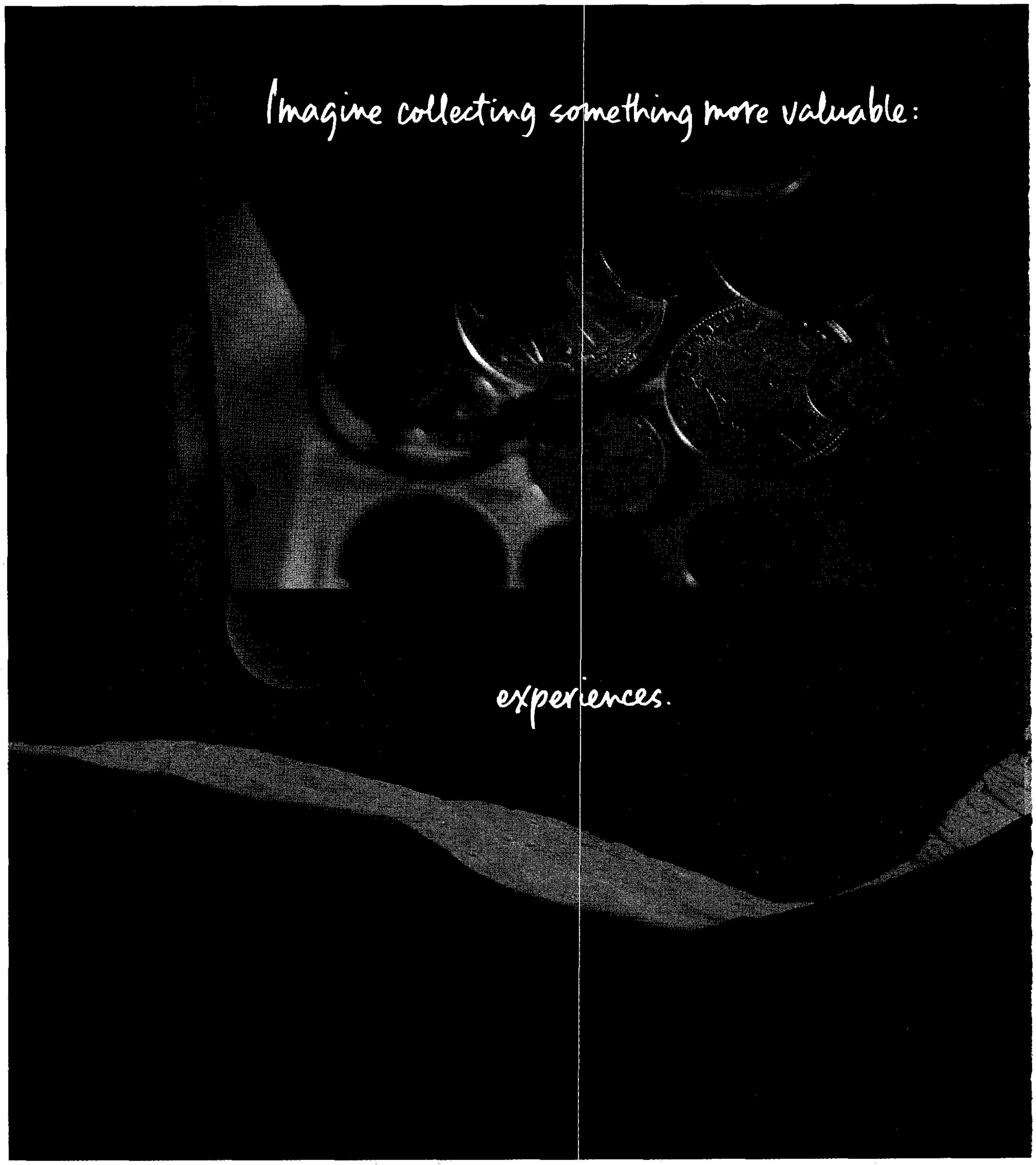
The original site had consisted of a divided ridge—the high ground forming a sort of Y, with a canyon opening out between its two prongs. Meier echoed the original topography in the campus's overall design: an arrival plaza, a restaurant, and various administrative and other institute offices would be grouped around the base of the Y, with the museum heading off along one prong and the Research Institute commanding the other. Into the now reconfigured canyon between the two would descend Meier's Central Garden, in many ways the Aristotelian spine, the prime meridian unifying his entire conception. It wouldn't be a garden, exactly, but, rather, a staircase progression of broad rectangular terraces, with a narrow concrete-girdled watercourse slicing straight down the middle.

Geometry and panorama: Meier's conception was resolutely of a piece—almost asphyxiatingly so, or so the architect's patrons began worrying as the project took shape. At first, the Getty executives tried to soften Meier's hard-edged approach by calling in various consulting landscape architects. "Essentially, the Getty people wanted a lush garden," a witness to the ensuing drama explained recently. "But Richard was beating up on the landscape architects, manipulating and ironing and then spitting them out, homogenizing the whole place, until the Getty people finally began to feel that maybe a full-fledged artist might be able to stand up to him."

Harold M. Williams, the trust's president and C.E.O., was in a particularly dicey position. A longtime fan of Meier's work, he had also become close friends with the architect. Yet now, as the overseer of the trust's entire operation, he was especially sensitive to the Getty's public image as a seven-billion-dollar monolith bestriding the cultural horizon. Therefore he could hardly be immune to arguments favoring a greater diversity of experience at the headquarters site itself. But Meier would hear nothing of these concerns, and in the end it took repeated calls from Williams to make him see that he might be losing absolute control over his Central Garden.

As the Getty people began exploring alternatives, the veteran Southern Californian Robert Irwin's name came up. As it happened, Irwin had been responding to invitations—or challenges—of this sort for quite a while. In fact, this was just about all he was doing anymore (though not on this scale). It was years since he had made an object that you could show in a gallery or, for that matter, buy and take home. People or places invite him over, and he visits and appraises the site, spending hours—or, sometimes, days and weeks—gauging the specific experiential qualities inherent in the situation, and eventually he either does or doesn't come up with a proposal pitched to precisely that specific moment and place, "conditioned," as he likes to say, "by the site itself."

One day, I asked Irwin whether that wasn't pretty much what architects themselves always did. I pointed out that Meier, in his original Getty prospectus, had sounded many of the same themes. "Well, yeah," Irwin replied. "Except with him, as with most of them, it's lip service. He has a formula, this Euclidean approach"—"Euclidean" being Irwin's term for what Meier calls "Aristotelian"—"and he applies it everywhere he goes. Look at the result. The Getty proposal was obviously going to be a Meier building. It was



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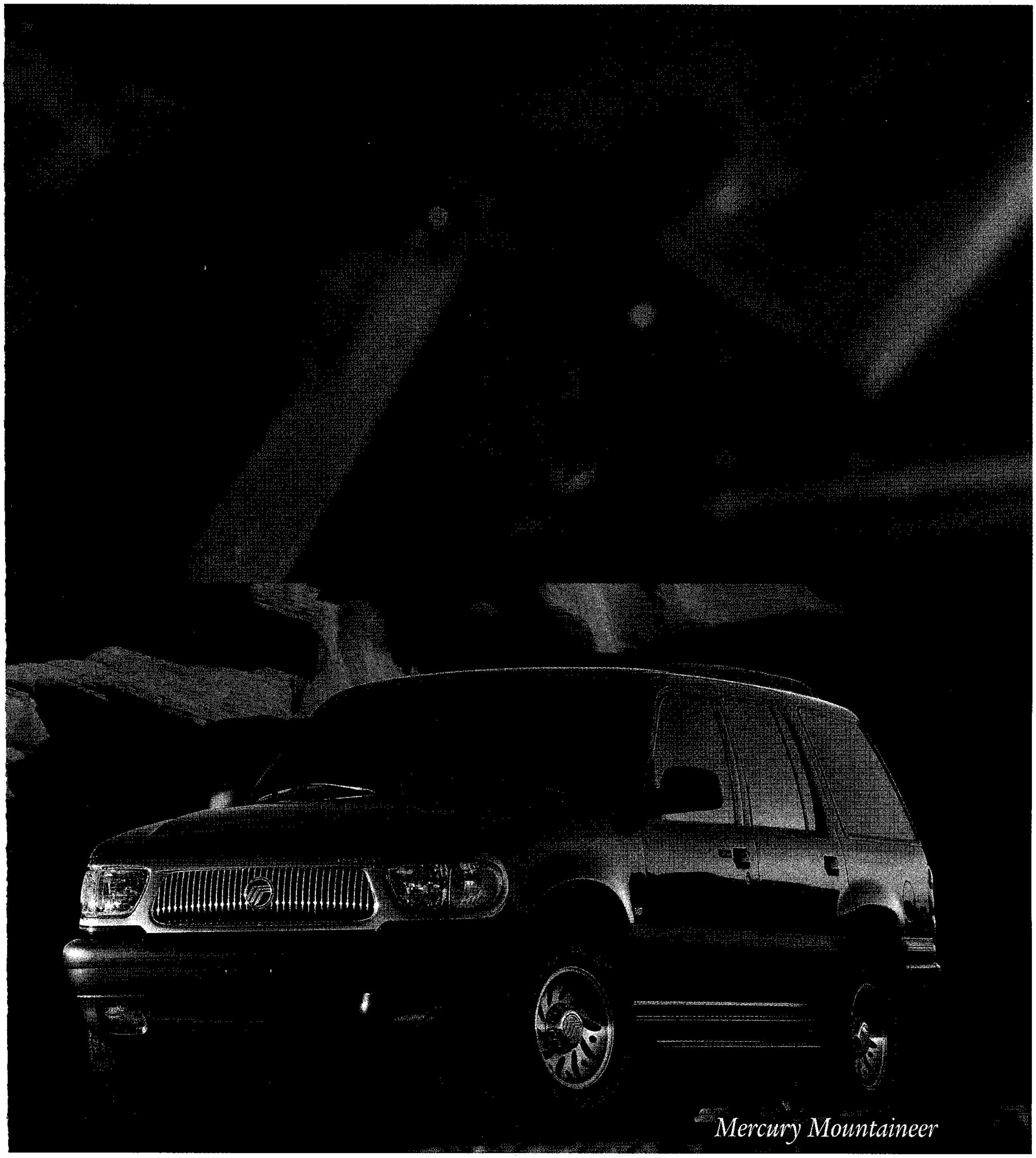

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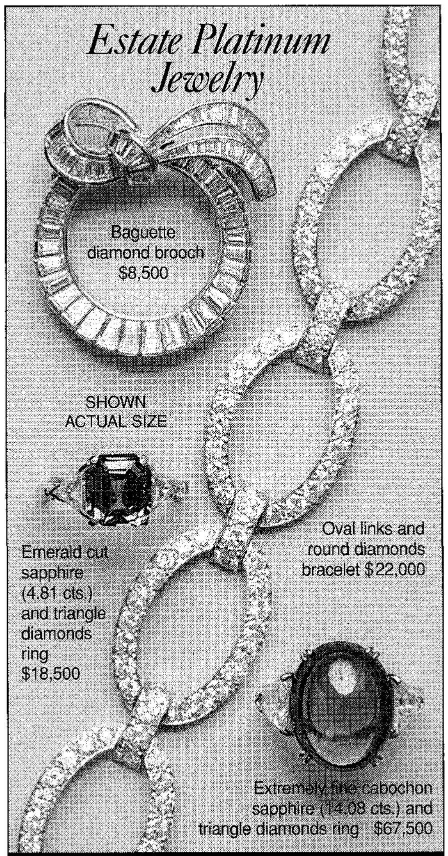

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going to read that way from a mile away—a Meier building on top of a hill, with a garden as its pedestal. This isn't even to criticize it, exactly: it's got all sorts of beautiful, really wonderful features. It's just nowhere near what I'm talking about."

It was by no means obvious that the Getty people quite grasped what Irwin was talking about, either—but at least they seemed willing to give his approach a try. Irwin came up from his San Diego home, paid several visits to the site and to the model shop, returned home, thought about it some more, came back up. "I began with a set of circumstances," he recalled. "As such, every decision had to make sense within the context of a set of cues. In this case, of course, the surrounding architecture was key. This was not going to be a garden off in a field someplace. I accepted its architectural setting—which was all but overpowering—but that, in turn, raised other questions. For how do you go from such a surround—from buildings like that—down to a flower? So that you can see this petal, that stalk? I began to think in terms of starting from geometry, compounding the geometry to pattern and the pattern to texture. And doing so in both directions—from the flower out to the buildings, and from the buildings back to the flower."

Eventually, Irwin was ready to make his presentation, and in a series of meetings in late 1992 and early 1993 he did so, in front of Meier, his associates, and senior Getty officials, at Meier's West L.A. office. For starters, he was proposing dispensing with the entire Meier "pedestal." The "natural" slope of the canyon would be reclaimed—at any rate, near the top of the garden. Toward the bottom he proposed raising up a curved embankment, thereby creating a sort of bowl. There would be plants everywhere—grasses, flowers, shrubs, low trees. Water would still course down the canyon slope, but now vaguely off center, in the form of a gently arching creek, girdled by rocks and boulders in such a way as to emphasize the sound of its gurgling. The creek would be bordered on both sides by parallel lines of stately sycamore trees—the sort one encounters, for instance, in the Luxembourg Gardens, in Paris. The trees, as they grew, would be shaved into sheer rectangular planes on the top and to the sides, in homage to the surrounding architecture—but over the creek their branches would be allowed to grow into each other in a virtual debauch of fertility. A shaded path of steps would run alongside and occasionally back and forth across the creek, which in turn would pick up speed as the slope steepened, approaching the bottom of the bowl. Then, suddenly, the creek would launch out over a staggered, concave stone wall—a "chadar" of the sort common in Moghul gardens in India—once again carefully tuned for sound as well as spray. Down below, at the bottom of the bowl, there would be a wide oval pool. Inside the pool there would be a large maze, consisting of three intersecting circles, fashioned entirely out of flamboyantly red, purple, and pink azaleas, which, although embedded in intricately shaped planters, would look as if they were floating upon the water.

Meier was stunned and, frankly, aghast. *Ovals*? What was Irwin talking about—*site-conditioned*? There were no ovals anywhere else in the entire plan! And, beyond that, of course, what had become of his precious prime meridian, the Aristotelian unities? Perhaps Meier already sensed the truly subversive aspect of Irwin's conception, for with this garden the artist was positing an all-out argument against permanence and eternal unities, and in favor, by contrast, of immediate presence and almost delirious multiplicity. He was going out of his way to make this a seasonal garden—one that would be changing all the time. The trees would be deciduous (unusual for California): their leaves would fall in the autumn, revealing the stark, skeletal structure underneath. For that matter, the entire garden would be designed to go mute in winter, a wild notion in seasonless Southern California—a winter garden. Then in the spring everything would come blazing back again to almost uncontrollable life. ("You can't control nature," Irwin explains. "You can only court it. That's why artists have always evaded nature. Landscape paintings, in a sense, are anything but.")

The Getty people endorsed the proposal, and directed Irwin and Meier to start collaborating from that point forward. Irwin, like everyone else on the site, was to run his plans and specifications through Meier's office, which would then contract out the work. Not surprisingly, things did not go altogether smoothly. One observer of the ensuing scene summed up matters at that stage under the simple rubric “When Fountainheads Collide.”

From Irwin’s point of view, Meier’s office seemed intent on sabotaging his efforts at every turn, and, clearly, things couldn’t go on this way. Indeed, they came to a head in a meeting in Meier’s office in May, 1993. Apparently, the loss of the panorama, caused by the raised far embankment, was at issue, and John Walsh, the museum’s director, recalls trying to assuage Meier’s fury on the subject by asking if he could really object if a visitor who had already been amply exposed to the view lost it for a while, especially if he was going to recover it again on the far side—to which Meier said yes, he could and he did. Harry Wolf, an associate of Meier’s, now rose and laid out an elegant, thoughtfully reasoned restatement of Meier’s argument, systematically eviscerating Irwin’s core positions. Irwin smiled beatifically the entire time, waiting for Wolf to finish. Eventually, still smiling, he asked, “Do you want a response?” Wolf said yes, he did. Still smiling, Irwin pronounced, “BULL . . . SHIT.”

“There followed the longest silence I think I’ve ever endured at a meeting,” Walsh says. “And it was at about that point that we realized that these two guys were simply not going to be able to work together.” In the days that followed, a boundary line—referred to almost immediately as the D.M.Z.—was established and ground rules were laid down: “It’s Richard’s water up here in the main plaza and on down to here, and after that it’s Bob’s water.” Irwin was authorized to hire his own consultants and deal with the contractors directly. As a regular visitor to the site characterized the situation for me, “In preschool I believe the phrase they have for this sort of arrangement is ‘parallel play.’ ”

Among the senior Getty staff members, “the whole situation provoked a lot of soul-searching,” Walsh recalls. “And in a big sense it was a leap of faith. Bob was so compelling, so much more articulate verbally than Richard—and yet, oddly, so much less so visually. Richard had all these gorgeous models and elevations and drawings. Bob had his schematic diagrams, which were, frankly, quite difficult to read. In the end, though, we went with his vision, which was absolutely commanding, and just prayed he’d be able to wrestle it to the ground.”

“I WAS in way over my head, which, actually, operating the way I do, is pretty much where I live,” Irwin confessed to me.

For one thing, he didn’t know the first thing about plants. Early on, he bought about a thousand dollars’ worth of horticultural books and began cutting them up, to generate collages of the kinds of plants he was hoping to be able to interweave. He sorted them as to height, texture, leaf shape and color, flower type—sorted them, that is, almost exclusively on the basis of their look, their feel, and their sensual presence, while, at first, anyway, remaining virtually oblivious of the question of whether it was even possible to grow such plants in California. He began visiting nurseries all over the state, his collages in hand, crossing off the impossibilities, generating fresh leads to alternatives.

Almost from the outset, he befriended the head groundskeeper at the Getty’s old Malibu facility, an affably stout character

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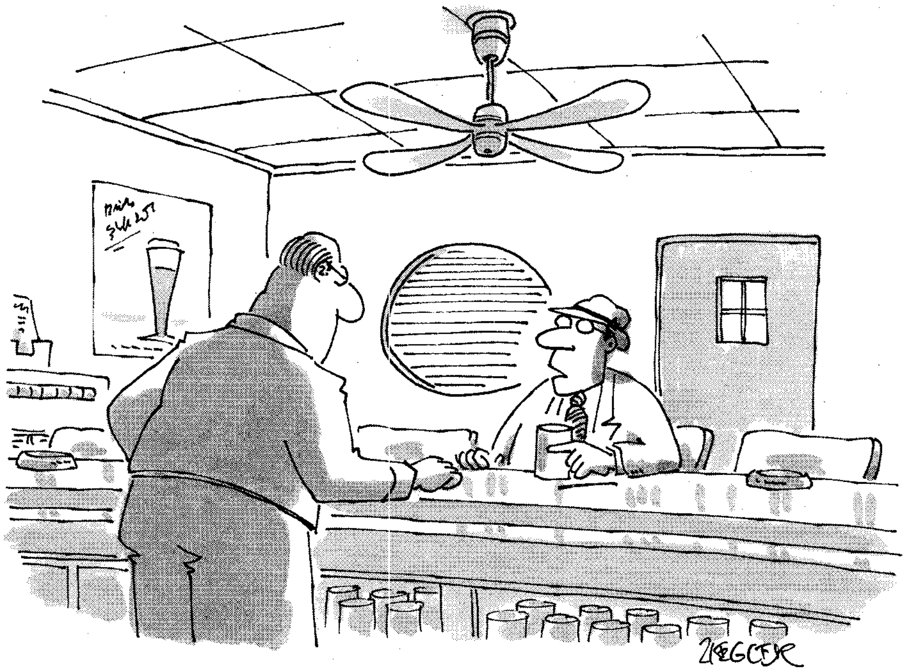

"I may not be in for a while, Eddie. My wife and I have decided to normalize relations."

• •

named Richard Naranjo, who would eventually be playing a similar role at the new campus. Together, they undertook a crash course in azaleas, constructing a full-scale triple-circle maze of planters on the Malibu back lot and stocking it with prize specimens a full two and a half years before they'd need to start transplanting them to the hilltop. They went on field trips together, visiting far-flung nurseries. "Bob had this way of looking at plants unlike anyone I've ever encountered," Naranjo told me recently. "For instance, he'd talk about how trees looked completely different lit from in front than from behind—not only a whole different color but a whole different density—which was going to be important because here they'd have to work both ways, which wasn't always the case. Things I'd never really thought about before. Invariably, we'd visit some new nursery and he'd spot some strange, scraggly tree and get all excited, pointing—'Richard, I want *that* tree'—to which I'd have to say, 'Bob, that tree is *dying*.' 'Shows you how much I know about gardening,' he'd reply cheerfully, very easygoing. But he was a great listener and a fast learner."

Eventually, Irwin also teamed up with Jim Duggan, a youthful nurseryman closer to his San Diego home, in Encinitas. "I don't know," Irwin says. "I just liked the guy. He was smart and passionate and hungry, and, bizarrely, he was really into swing dancing—a very good sign." Duggan began procuring specimens to Irwin's specifications, and Irwin went out regularly to Duggan's place to look and sort and mix. One day a few months ago, when I happened to be in San Diego, he took me along. Duggan turned out to be a lanky fellow with stringy strawberry-blond hair pulled back in a ponytail under a wide straw hat. "There's never going to have been a garden quite like Bob's," he said to me at one point, as Irwin loped up the hill to inspect a stand of Cupid's-dart. "Most other gardens, you've got your roses over here and your wisteria over there. Things are organized vaguely on the basis of taxonomy or ecosystem—whatever. Bob's thrown all those categories out. He's mixing together things nobody ever thought of trying—who knows if some of them will even succeed in growing side by side."

Irwin loped back, wiping his hands, made a few comments on the darts, and then elaborated on his vision of the garden. "For instance, in one area maybe we'll have white bougainvillea and white roses interlaced—slightly different colors, but both of them bulletproof, guaranteed to flourish—and then from out of their midst a little time bomb, a total exotic surprise, the snapper, say some dalechampias, this incredible purple-blue, just for a few weeks and then gone. And then, as those die out, from underneath will be rising up some new combination in time for the next season." Irwin smiled, and, turning to Duggan, said, "Meier has no idea."

The three of us went into Duggan's shack, where it turned out that Duggan was a bit of a computer maven: he'd been charting the plantings for the entire garden, specimen by specimen, stand by stand, season by season. He offered to print out a list of the finalists—more than five hundred of them. There were fourteen types of vines and another fourteen kinds of small trees; there were twenty roses (Blue Nile, China Doll, Gingersnap, Iceberg . . .), fifty kinds of bulbs, and hundreds of shrubs and perennials. "I've got various nursery friends who come by and flip through these lists, shaking their heads," Duggan said, "and I tell them, 'You got to understand, this isn't just an ordinary garden. It's more like'— What's that phrase you're always using, Bob?" They invoked it together, almost a singsong mantra: "A sculpture in the form of a garden aspiring to be art."

It was a typical Irwinesque formulation—he often reverts to phrases that sound really good, then parse a bit oddly on the page—but it struck me that the key word in this particular formula wasn't so much "sculpture" or "art" as "aspiring." Philosophically speaking, Bob was planting his standard resolutely in the soil of Becoming, as opposed to that of Being.

Just before leaving, Irwin and Duggan reviewed the soil situation. "As dark as possible," Irwin kept saying. "The darker the better. Worm castings, peat moss, whatever it takes. Nobody ever seems to pay attention to the color of the soil, but, especially in winter, the soil is going to be a lot of what's on show."

AND, for all that, plants and soil constituted only a fraction of Irwin's concerns when it came to the garden. He'd been just as deeply engaged by the challenge of rocks, for instance—scouring quarries throughout the country before settling on green chert from the California Gold Country for the boulders at the head of the stream, Montana Kinnesaw for the flanks of the watercourse, clean-cut slabs of Tennessee Blue Ridge sandstone for the footpaths, and carnelian granite from South Dakota for the

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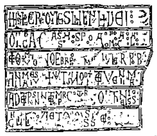

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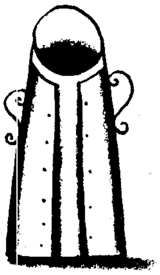
staggered waterfall. "And every single stone hand-selected," Irwin insisted. The same effort went into selecting the wood for the bridges, arbors, and benches, which turned out to be teak; the bronze for the railings and drains; the specially treated rebar for the bougainvillea bowers; and the decomposed granite for the terraces. In each case, not only was Irwin making choices about materials; he was having to locate just the right people to help him realize his vision. By the end, he had engaged three engineering offices and eleven other consulting firms.

And that's without even mentioning the handicapped. Don't get Irwin started on the handicapped. In the midst of all his other concerns, Irwin learned that the "disabled-access consultant" to the Getty Trust was objecting to the inaccessibility of his streamside path for wheelchairs. "I couldn't believe it," Irwin says, sputtering. "I mean, I'd provided ramps on both sides of the garden, running along the retaining walls down to the oval pool, but they were objecting to the fact that they weren't going to be able to make it down the steps along the side of the brook as well—and if *they* couldn't they were damned if they were going to let anybody else, either. 'Let me see if I have this straight,' I told them. 'This isn't the Department of Motor Vehicles, or something: you don't have to come here. The only reason you'd want to come here, presumably, is because of the beauty—which you now want to destroy so you can get to it?' Didn't work. They would not be swayed." In the end, though, as with many of these crises, the challenge only further enhanced the garden. Irwin dutifully filleted the stream of its step path and, instead, deployed a widely swaying zigzag ramp, back and forth down the entire slope.

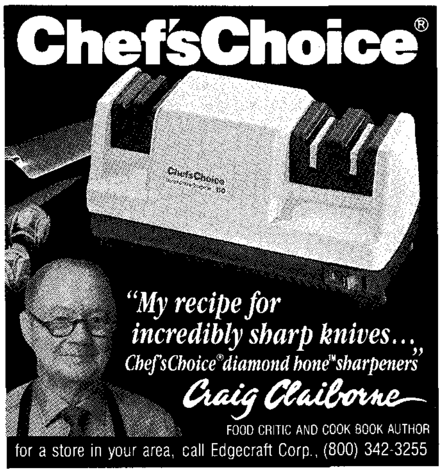
Now, back at his apartment (with his wife of eight years, Adele, in the kitchen preparing a meal and Anna-Grace, his daughter, capering underfoot), Irwin spread out a revised plan of the garden on his drafting table. "See," he explained. "You'll start up here, just below Meier's plaza, and then cut diagonally right through the sycamore allée and across the brook—only, this first time, the water won't even be visible yet, it will be coursing deep between the rocks under the bridge; you'll get this nice throaty sound wafting up, you'll feel the vibration, but you won't see anything—and then on out the other side a few hundred feet and then a switchback, after which you'll slice through the allée once again, over the brook, now splashing quite visibly beneath you, and on out the other side, then another switchback, and back again. Walking the path should induce this strangely mesmerizing effect, and with each switchback the character of the surrounding garden will change, getting more and more effusive. And every inch of it, I assure you, is wheelchair-accessible—in fact, precise to the inch!"

It sounded wonderful. It also looked, lying there spread out across Irwin's worktable, if you momentarily allowed yourself to imagine the prospect through another set of eyes, like an almost excruciating act of defacement: a jagged zigzag gash across the heart of a perfect Aristotelian expanse.

Not that Meier was without recourse. Irwin, as if he'd read my thoughts, pointed to a spot at the top of the D.M.Z. and said, "This is where Meier was charged with delivering the water over to me. As you can see, it flows along this straight channel, cutting across his upper plaza, and then it has to descend about twenty feet to the start of my garden stream, and what he's basically done—you can see it here—is that he's constructed this twenty-foot-tall white urinal, the water continuously streaming—or should I say 'flushing'—down its sides."



NOT long ago, I visited Irwin at the Getty hilltop work site as he was rushing to complete the garden's installation in time for the December opening. Looking down from the upper plaza, from a spot alongside the top rim of the urinal (in fairness, more like a grotto), I found it hard to imagine how Irwin and his team of co-workers—more than seventy-five of them—were ever going to pull things off. The garden was nowhere in sight. Sinuous crape myrtles rimmed the distant embankment, but there were as yet no other plants, shrubs, or grasses—not even any dark soil. Dust was billowing up everywhere. Cranes sliced through the air, ferrying their load of boulders. Workers in gleaming-white hard hats were spreading gravel, laying slabs of Blue Ridge sandstone, welding Corten, jimmying trellises, digging holes for trees. Amid this activity, it was easy to spot Irwin: he



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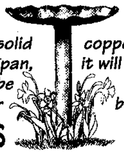

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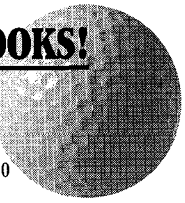

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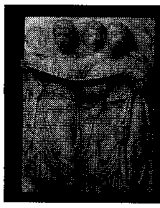
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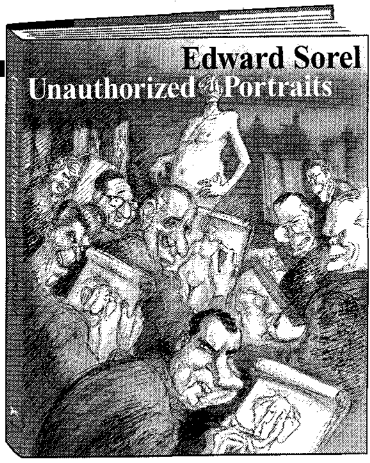
was the one with the wide straw Vanessa Bell garden hat flopping incongruously beneath a hard hat of his own. "Yeah, sure," he said when I reached him. "Round here you're a lot more likely to get whacked by the sun than by any falling girders."

Irwin went about the grounds, checking on individual work sites, crouching down on his knees to chat about specific details with the workers. As he ambled about, it was obvious how highly they thought of him, but perhaps even more striking was the regard in which he held them. He treated them as peers, immensely respectful of their skills, their craft. (This was all the more striking when you recalled how much trouble Irwin often has treating his peers, such as Meier, as peers.) Then he wandered over to the far embankment, under the crape-myrtle canopy, and gazed out over the circle-maze pool and beyond it—up toward the buildings towering on the ridges above. "This is a real power spot," he said. "You know how Indians in the desert sometimes talk about power places? Well, this may be *the* power spot for the entire Getty Center. Standing here, you've got the whole place by the short hairs." And the effect *was* striking. You could see where Irwin got the otherwise arbitrary-seeming idea for the three concentric circles, how they'd derived from the configuration of the buildings looming above. But somehow he had managed to turn the effect inside out: it was as if someone, godlike, had dropped three pebbles in a pool and the concentric ripples, shimmering ever outward, beyond the pool rim and up the sides of the canyon, had somehow magically coalesced into the buildings.

It was like that, and then it wasn't like that at all—I mean this contest of egos. A few minutes later, I was talking with Andy Spurlock, a landscape-architect friend of Irwin's from San Diego whom he'd enlisted for his team at an early stage. "It's funny," he said. "You know who I see all over this garden are Adele and Anna-Grace. I think this garden grows almost directly out of this deep new sense of Bob's—late in his life—of family life. He's terrifically sentimental. Tears come easy to his eyes when he's watching Anna-Grace and Adele. I think when you get the plants in here and they start playing off each other you're going to have this tremendous sense of an enveloping heart and intimacy, this cusping sense of fertility, a real strong emotional feeling. The whole thing even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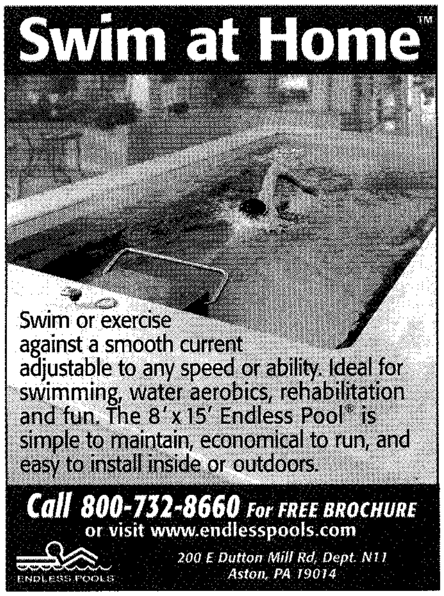

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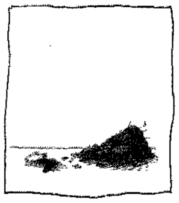

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—PHILLIS LEVIN

looks like a womb. And I don't think there's any doubt where that's coming from."

In that context, it seemed sadly ironic that the garden would be barren in December. I walked over to join Irwin, who was looking at something on the bougainvillea terrace above the chadar wall. I asked him whether the December opening grieved him. "Ah, nah," he said. "Maybe it would have been a little easier had the place opened in the spring, but the point is, the spring wouldn't have been the garden, either. It's going to take three, seven years for the trees to grow in, the underbrush to fill out. That's part of what the garden's about. If you're going to experience it in all of its qualities, you have to keep coming back. A garden is a commitment."

He was quiet for a few moments, his mind obviously wandering. "It comes back to this question of what people see when they look, what they base their gestures on. You walk around the campus with Meier, and you can be deep in the bowels of the library, and he'll indicate some imaginary point on the floor, completely surrounded by walls, and tell you how that point lines up perfectly with some other point over on the other side, in the museum. With him, it's purely conceptual, it's the purest abstraction."

As we ambled back toward the base of the zigzag walk, he said, "The Getty people wanted me to put up a signature plaque somewhere, and I was resisting, but eventually I agreed to place a pair of little landing stones here where the walk ramp opens out onto this terrace. They'll face each other, Rorschach style, with my signature and the date, but mainly they will say on one side 'EVER PRESENT, NEVER TWICE THE SAME' and on the other 'EVER CHANGING, NEVER LESS THAN WHOLE.' "

Heracleitus, I suggested, to Meier's Aristotle? "I suppose so," Irwin responded. We began climbing out of the garden bowl. "Because it all comes down to how you answer a single question: Is the moment of perception—that first moment, before all the abstracting, conceptualizing processes that follow—is that moment closest to or furthest from the real? Everything depends on how you answer that question."

As we climbed, and the buildings above loomed larger and larger, it occurred to me that, despite all the tensions of the collaboration, the Getty leaders had had a truly striking intuition when they invited Irwin into Meier's space. Irwin could have had no better—no stronger—site against which to stage his argument. And Meier's strengths, in turn, may leap out all the more vividly set off against Irwin's.

I tried this notion out on Irwin as we emerged from the garden and out onto the plaza. At first, he seemed to bridle, but then he began to relent. "Maybe," he said. "Maybe. It's a little like the Lindy, which was my favorite dance back in the days of those swing contests. The whole key to the Lindy was the shoulder twist: you and your partner would be coming at each other full force and at the last moment you'd do this little shoulder twist and spin each other around, so that you were acting as counterweights to each other, and, man, if you got it going real good, it could get to the point where you were almost floating—really—just flying."

He laughed at the memory of it. "Great dance," he said. "Great dance." ♦

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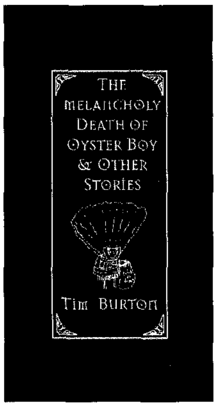
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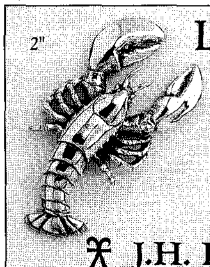

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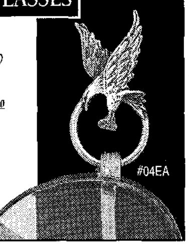

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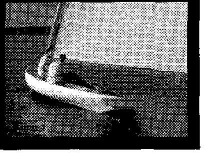


REFLECTIONS

THE SPLIT

An intersection where opposite worlds collide.

BY SUZANNAH LESSARD

IN the middle of Park Avenue, just north of Ninety-sixth Street in Manhattan, there is a little nowhere of a paved-over spot that is the last in a sequence of otherwise lushly cultivated malls running up the center of the avenue from Forty-sixth Street. Looking south from that island, one sees the parapets of Park silhouetted against the sky—two phalanxes of Italianate apartment buildings, built in the nineteen-twenties, quoined, rusticated, and corniced, in many instances, and from twelve to fifteen stories high. Facing each other, they stand at attention, chests swelling, the cornices creating the effect of a martial hat with a brim and generally making a statement of high-bourgeois solidarity which brooks no contradiction. This is the Upper East Side.

Turning to the north, one sees a porous hodgepodge of nineteenth-century tenements and high-rise public housing divided by four sets of train tracks which shoot out from under the hill at Ninety-seventh Street, continuing on a viaduct that cuts a wide swath through the vista. The viaduct bodychecks the two sides of Park Avenue, reducing it to a mingy, shadowed passage not even up to the standard of an ordinary street. This is Harlem. Here at Ninety-sixth Street, the nation's richest neighborhood collides with one of the poorest so sharply that it is very nearly possible to stand with one foot in each.

The community immediately north of Ninety-sixth Street is East Harlem, also known as the Barrio, because of the many Puerto Ricans who live there. In 1990, the median family income in the Barrio (somewhat skewed by residences attached to Mount Sinai Hospital and by a thin strip of wealth that continues up Fifth Avenue) was twenty thousand dollars a year; farther north, in the Bradhurst area of Harlem, it was six thousand dollars a year, the lowest in the United States, with the exception of a former leper colony in Hawaii. The neighborhood immediately to the south of Ninety-sixth and Park is Carnegie Hill, an old-fashioned, traditionally Wasp neighborhood, where the median family income is a modest hundred and twenty-nine thousand a year. Carnegie Hill overlaps with the Upper East Side historic district, which runs from Fifth Avenue to Lexington Avenue and from Seventy-ninth Street down to Fifty-ninth. South of Seventy-second Street there is an eight-block area where the median household income of homeowners is seven hundred and thirty thousand dollars a year. At Ninety-seventh and Park, unemployed men of varying ages sit on milk crates outside a bodega drinking *cerveza fría*. A few blocks south on Madison, you can buy a little girl's dress for four hundred and seventy dollars.

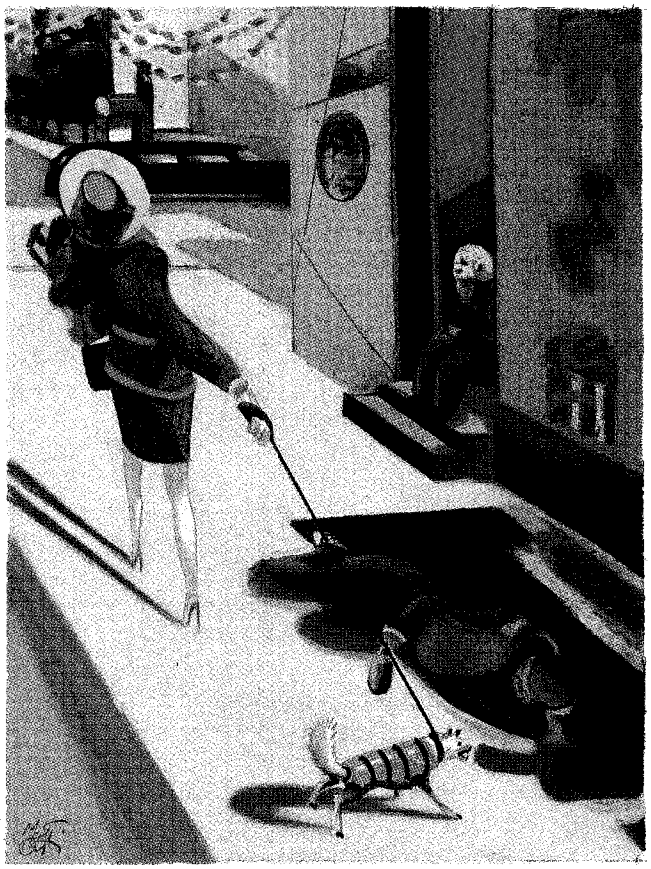
For New Yorkers, this abrupt juncture of the Upper East Side and Harlem is like a formation of the Ice Age: dramatic, but so familiar that it is barely noticed. The divide reflects a split in American society that is usually blurred by geographic distance, yet even here, where it is abrupt and plainly evident, it is somehow unseen.

SOMETIMES, as a way of trying to take in more deeply what the split is, and what it is to cross it, I would take the subway to 125th Street and then walk back through East Harlem toward Ninety-sixth. Or, conversely, I would get off at Fifty-ninth Street and follow the procession of Park Avenue uptown. In either case, what I found was that, though I was alert and absorbed in the world around me right up to the boundary, at the moment of crossing I would go into a little blackout, a shutting down of awareness, as if at that moment I had stepped into a special chamber designed to equalize the effects of vastly differing pressures.

Katharine Hellman, a young woman who works as a therapist in an elementary school in Harlem, knew what I meant by a disjunction that was almost more than one could absorb. She grew up in a wealthy family on the Upper East Side, assuming, as a girl, that a normal home was a Park Avenue duplex with Magrittes on the wall, as she put it. When she first started working in Harlem, she always felt a tremendous pressure, on returning to her own world, to tell what she knew—to try to convey, for example, that that day she had visited the home of a student where there was no furniture. "I had never conceived of such a thing," she said. "I wanted to bring people from my world to the apartment with no furniture. It seemed like important knowledge. You have to see it—if you haven't seen it, there is something about it you might not get."

The school Hellman works at is on a nearly abandoned street where brownstones with punched-out or blocked-up windows have lost their stoops, so that the pedimented landings hang disconnected in the air. One June Friday after school in that early period of her career, she travelled up to her family's vacation home, a farm in Connecticut, for the weekend, and found herself standing in a lovely field. She thought it was a good thing that it took some time to get there, because "if you went from one place to the other instantly you would go crazy because you couldn't make the shift fast enough."

The shift can be difficult to absorb in the reverse direction as well. A young woman I will call Manuela, a high-school student who had worked in a crack factory for a time, was taken by a neighborhood program on a day trip to Princeton University. She was enraged that she had been shown this beautiful college world, because she knew that she could never become a part of it. She attends a high school in East Harlem that was founded expressly to prepare students for college, but in actuality most of the kids are nowhere near that level. Manuela says that when she was very small her mother was almost certainly on drugs; she remembers dialling 911 once because she was alone in the apartment in the middle of the night. She was not yet in school when her mother died of AIDS, and she now lives with her grandmother.



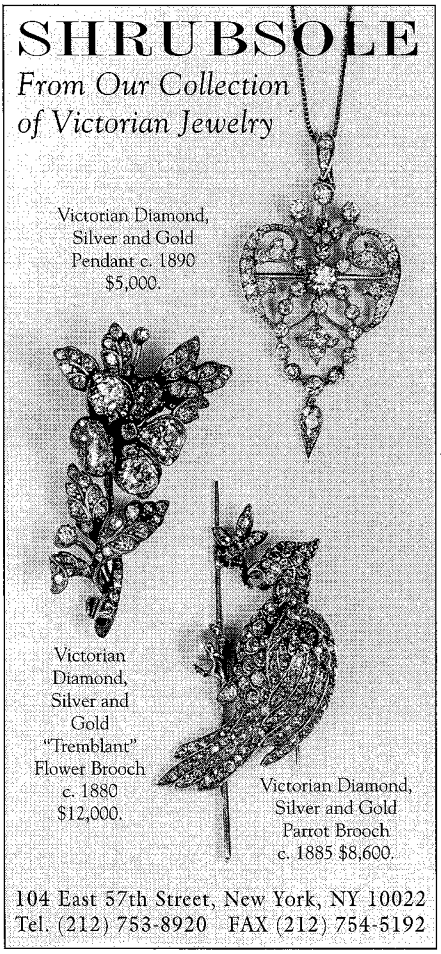
LORENZO MATTOTTI

Manuela was upset by her visit to Princeton. Yet it is also true that people who live in the inner city know very well how others live: if nothing else, television is a daily reminder. Yolanda Sanchez, who works in a clinic in the Bronx, felt no shift in pressure in the days when she still lived in East Harlem, where she had grown up, and was going to school on the Upper East Side, studying to become a social worker. "I might think, Isn't it amazing that a person would be able to afford to pay another to wash the street in front of their house," she said. Pedro Gomez is an affable young man who lives in the Barrio and works as a doorman at a Park Avenue apartment building that is right on the border. At work, in his uniform and white gloves, he seems to enjoy himself as he chats with the gentlemen leaving for their offices and crouches down to eye level with children on their way to school. Of the boundary that he crosses daily he said to me, "There's no difference—it's just people."

The grid was laid down over the countryside of Manhattan Island in 1811, and ran all the way up to what it designated as 155th Street, although for the most part the city had grown only as far north as Houston Street at that time. It was a neoclassical conception, a rational ideal that was typically nineteenth-century: the whole Midwest was gridded into states, counties, and homesteading lots. In New York, the primary function of the grid was to facilitate real-estate development. The grid-makers were so far ahead of the time, however, that there was nothing for decades after they laid it down but a dreary cross-hatching of muddy tracks in a wasteland of disturbed earth.

Though East Harlem is farther north than the Upper East Side, it was settled earlier, by Irish fugitives from overcrowded immigrant slums downtown. They built shanties along the Harlem River and were called goaters, after their favorite form of livestock. As conditions downtown worsened, the squatter community grew. By the eighteen-sixties, the first urban structures had gone up, and after 1880 most of the tenements were built in the "dumbbell" style—an improvement over downtown models in that the buildings had slight indentations on the sides to let in light and air. With their narrow façades obediently aligned with the gridded street front, the first tenements stood alone in the wasteland, or in twos or threes, accompanied only by occasional goaters' shanties.

The same surreal vistas of urban buildings exposed on the naked grid did not appear on the Upper East Side until 1894, when Caroline Schermerhorn Astor—the wife of William Astor and the co-founder of the society list known as the Four Hundred—built an imitation French château in the mud at Fifth Avenue and Sixty-fifth Street, thereby signalling to Gilded Age society not only that this would be the next fashionable neighborhood but that architectural excess was as acceptable in the city as it had become out of town. East Harlem was at this point a teeming neighborhood, upon which wave after wave of immigrants—Irish, then German, then Jewish—crashed, and it soon rivalled the Lower East Side in horrific health conditions and overcrowding, as well as in a pulsing dynamism. On the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Upper East Side, other palazzo builders followed Mrs. Astor, and a costume ball of town houses in a dazzling variety of architectural styles appeared on the side streets off Fifth Avenue.

Park Avenue, known as Fourth Avenue then, remained through all this a seedy neighborhood, because the New York Central Railroad ran up the middle in an open cut, spewing cinders and rattling with noise. Then William Wilgus, the vice-president and chief engineer of the railroad, saw that if the railroad switched from steam to electric power the cut could be covered up and the value of the land along the avenue—land owned by the New York Central and the Vanderbilts—would soar. The avenue was renamed Park, and development there was modelled on the grand nineteenth-century visions of Baron Haussmann, Napoleon III's master planner, who had rebuilt Paris, creating wide boulevards to reflect the imperial status of modern France.

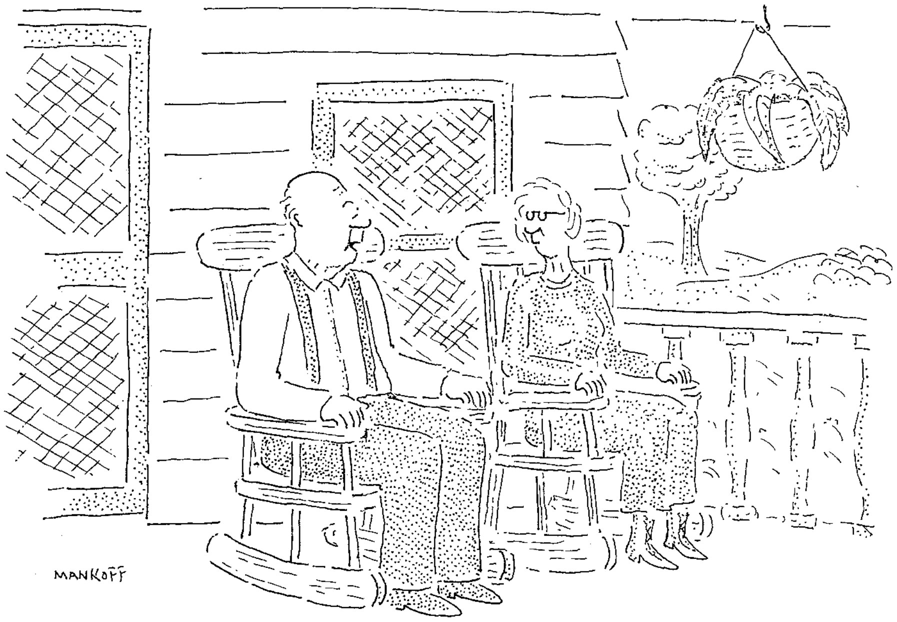
It was not until 1921, however, that the prototypical Park Avenue apartment building went up—the Marguery, a colossus consuming the entire block between Forty-seventh and Forty-eighth on the west side of Park, offering seventeen- and eighteen-room apartments and containing several restaurants managed by the Ritz. One or two members of Society succumbed to the lure of luxury and convenience over the hidebound convention of the town house, and then there was a reverse domino effect—a sequential uprising of Marguery-type buildings, creating the consistent architectural panorama that is the Park Avenue we know today, continuing right on up to Ninety-sixth Street, where it was brought to a halt by the emergence of the tracks from under the hill there, and by the crash of 1929.

By this time, East Harlem had become a predominantly Italian neighborhood, its residents still very poor, but working, and with middle-class people who offered them professional services living in their midst. Beginning in the twenties and thirties and gaining momentum in the fifties, the Italians of East Harlem moved on, yielding to Puerto Ricans. This turnover reflected an established pattern of successive upward mobility, except that Harlem generally was becoming an "inner city": it was more and more isolated from the mainstream economy and was losing its middle-class population as its lower-class population lost jobs, while crime and dissolution separated it further from the mainstream society.

Ordinary things about the Upper East Side became vivid, even astonishing, when I had walked down into the neighborhood from Harlem. I noticed how during the morning rush hour Park Avenue streams with taxis as if with yellow pigment, but the atmosphere is nonetheless serene, for trucks are banned and the lights are not staggered—the traffic is brought to a halt for the entire length of the avenue every few minutes. I was struck by the men in midlife issuing from their buildings with lobbies that looked small and cozy in comparison with the grandeur of the façades. I noted the playfulness in their clothing—a bright-colored cashmere scarf or a ski cap with a tassel. They looked very clean, and I saw in their faces an attractive worldly complexity—the well-being that comes of having one's powers fully engaged. I watched them take time for an easygoing exchange with the doorman, sometimes getting into a cab he had hailed, or into a chauffeured car, or walking on down spacious, uncrowded sidewalks with a light, elegantly shod step.

I became aware for the first time that the Upper East Side is rooted in midtown—one of the highest-priced shopping districts in the world. But in contrast to the shops in midtown those on the Upper East Side have an intimate quality. Some of them might almost be a part of someone's home. (Much on the Upper East Side beckons with a homelike allure while at the same time the way is barred: the lobby is guarded by a doorman; the shop has a buzzer on the door.) Here you can find a store devoted entirely to buttons, or to shaving equipment, or personalized stationery and engraved invitations. The window displays often include a rough, beat-up common object, like an old knocked-together wooden chest, little more than a crate, or an old scale, rusty and chipped—objects that might look shabby elsewhere but look luminously beautiful here because they are placed and lit so perfectly, their textures and irregularities becoming, in that pristine environment, aesthetically pleasurable.

The burnishing effects of care also have a way of disguising common ob-



"No, I don't want to live forever, but I damn sure don't want to to be dead forever, either."

• •

jects, so that the display in a liquor-store window somehow makes it look like a bookstore, and the bookstore looks like an art gallery, and the dressy pumps in the shoe-store window somehow look like vintage brandies, while stylishly decorated eggs clustered in the window of a bakery look like fancy shoes. Inside, the bakery is humbly picturesque, as if it were situated in a remote European village—an effect so studiously managed that entering the store is almost like entering a painting.

Real estate in the Upper East Side historic district is perhaps the most valuable, block by block, in the United States. On the side streets, one is hard put to find even a square inch that is not polished or steamed or embellished by a planter bearing, say, meticulously groomed small evergreens of an exotic variety. There is no improvisation here. Not a sliver of space has been neglected; indeed, there are quite a few buildings that are themselves barely more than slivers—contemporary architects' ingenious designs for the use of lots that would ordinarily be considered too narrow to build on. There is in this a kind of massing that is like a popular social event—an effect of crisp, alert energy, of contained excitement, even of merriment. The town houses crowd each other like jostling children eager for sweets, barely holding a line: their different roofs (dormers, rounded slate, the slanting glass of studios), some peaked and others corniced, making up a playful visual text that streaks back and forth across the architectural vocabulary of Western civilization.

Stopping in at the offices of local political representatives—a member of the community board, a State Assembly person—I heard about recent concerns of the neighborhood: Double-parked cars. Whether to create a private security district. Cleanup around a public school. This is an activist community, highly sensitive to any inroads on quality of life, and it expects its political representatives—who tend to be of a lower socioeconomic class than their constituents—to act quickly and effectively on its complaints. Nevertheless, meetings of Community Board 11 are famously decorous. ("Wasps don't shout, they sue," one representative commented.) The most boisterous meeting in memory had to do with the children's zoo.

In the course of my walks across the split, I became acutely conscious of the purr in the atmosphere along these quiet streets where chores are diligently performed by a vast staff (garbage stacked neatly just before pickup, brass polished, clean clothing delivered), of a pervasive sense of contentment that is profoundly reassuring even for the passerby. A woman

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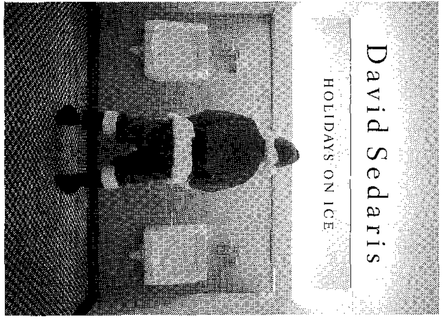

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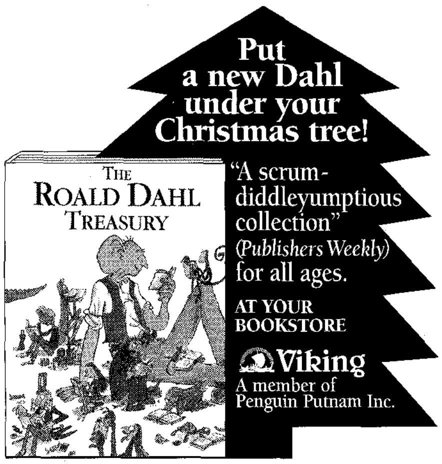
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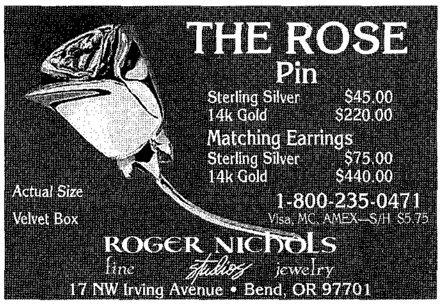
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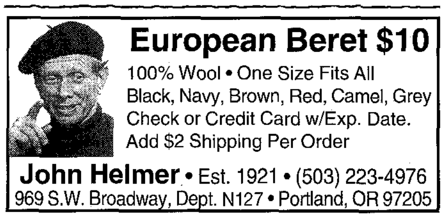
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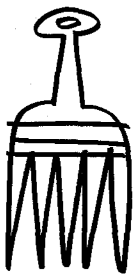
walks under trees toward the light-filled open space of Park Avenue, in a coat that is both generously cut and sharply shaped and sways from shoulders to midcalf; she has tidy ankles and trim, close-fitting shoes. It was the delineated wrist and ankle that, in the end, emerged for me as the hallmark of the Upper East Side: somewhat in defiance of fashion and in contrast to the muffled, bundled look of the parkas and sneakers that are ubiquitous in East Harlem and, when they are old and less than clean, can seem to be on a continuum with the pile of rags in a doorway beneath which one can barely discern the shape of a sleeping body.

AT Lexington and 124th Street, I know that I am in the Barrio because I see oranges peeled in a decorative way hanging in a string bag from a vender's cart. Spanish crackles around me. Emmaus House, a shelter across the street, which also provides a variety of other services to the homeless, looks worn and trafficked, the walls of the entryway silvered as if by a million hands. Drug addicts nod out, a dealer deals, the vender greets passersby. Though nearly everyone I see, with the exception of some young people, looks battered or injured or in some way physically stressed, the atmosphere is gregarious, at moments rippling with fun.

To the east, activity falls off quickly. Many buildings are boarded up, and the traffic is so light that even on the avenues men can work on cars well away from the curb. Along 120th Street, a stand of housing projects opens up the sky. Shades are drawn. Inside, intercoms and elevators are usually broken, and graffiti-ridden halls smell of urine; they are the domain of drug users, and are unsafe for the families attempting to bring up children. The exterior is banal and bureaucratic, but when I step off the street and into the domain of the projects the hair rises on the back of my neck.



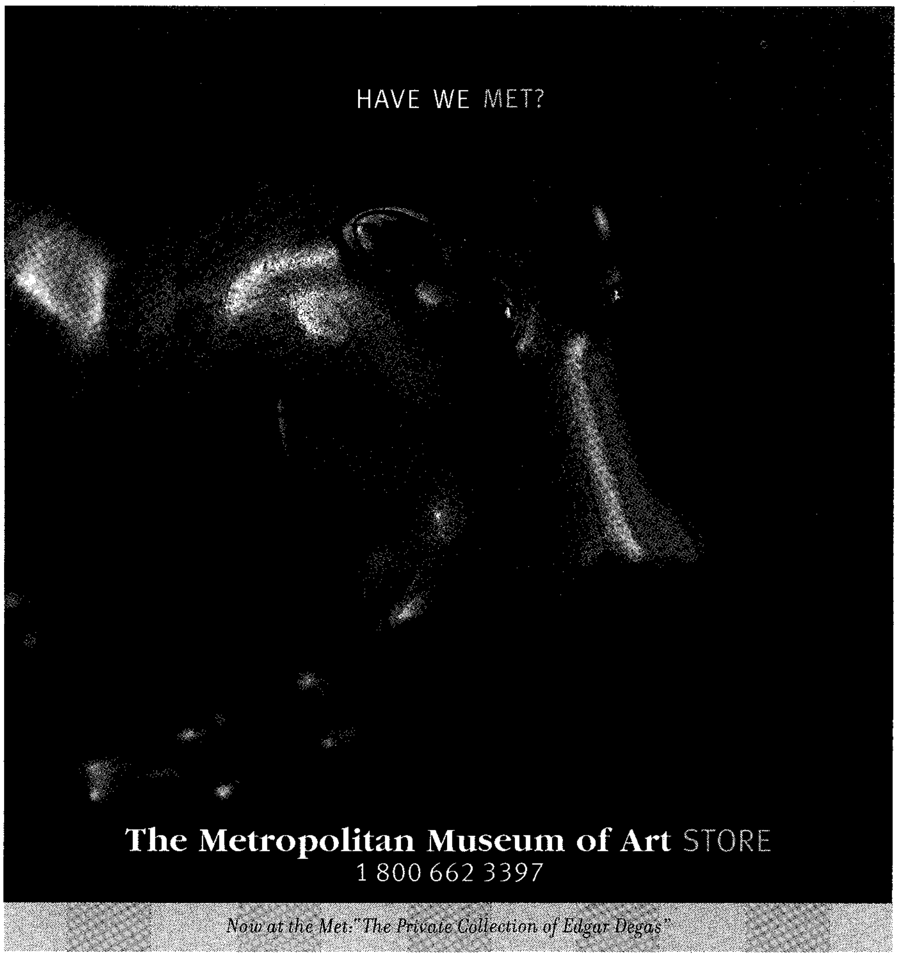
East Harlem has the highest density of public housing in New York, and New York has the highest density in the country. Most of the housing went up in the late fifties and the sixties, driven by powerful visions of urban renewal which ripped out organic neighborhoods and, with them, the generative, socializing life of the street. As architecture, the projects reflect Le Corbusier's dream of the Radiant City, in which people would live in high-rise buildings separated by green expanses, connected by high-speed rail running at about the third-story level—a democratic utopia where architecture would break away from the class-ridden traditions of the past.

In the sixties and seventies, the population of East Harlem, like that of inner cities across the country, declined drastically, and the neighborhood went from being one of the most populated areas in the city to being one of the least populated. For decades, the available housing stock decreased steadily as the city pursued a policy of slum clearance through demolition. Because of this policy, a porous, flattened landscape began to appear, in which little groups of town houses or tenements are left freestanding, surrounded by vacant lots—a landscape eerily similar to that of the goaters' time, when urban buildings, alone or in small packs, first started going up on the empty grid. One even comes across plywood shacks in vacant lots in East Harlem—they are called casitas—which echo the shanties of the previous century. There is in large stretches of East Harlem a marginal, maverick feeling, a faraway mood, a deadness in the air that seems incompatible with the charged, compressed atmosphere of Manhattan. One would not be altogether surprised to see a goat.

THESE are some of the community concerns in East Harlem: The third highest incidence of AIDS in the city (after Chelsea and the Greenwich Village area). A generation lost to crack and heroin. That generation's children, traumatized in early life, now filling the schools. Teen-age pregnancy. Overcrowding. Apartments with no heat. Poor health. High unemployment. Visiting politicians on 116th Street, I came across the idea that the Barrio could become a mecca for tourists—a kind of Latin Quarter that would draw people from south of Ninety-sixth Street with restaurants and night clubs—and the idea of turning the old Washburn Wire factory, closed in 1982, into a shopping mall, and a rumor that the "smart money" was buying above Ninety-sixth Street now and soon there would be hard bargains to be driven with developers, who would be refused access to the neighborhood unless they hired residents. The Barrio is an Empowerment Zone, which means that there is federal money to support businesses there, and it is not to deny that good may come of this (though businesses don't generally thrive where people have little money), or that hope itself can be productive, to say that beyond these good things there is an abyss of need that seems to engulf them. The spirit of the age is that all problems can be solved by free enterprise, and this creates an atmosphere of boosterism in which it becomes a kind of betrayal to acknowledge that abyss.

To the west of Park Avenue and a few blocks up there is an area where weeds grow on unused land and a single ailanthus tree leans into two brownstones that cling to each other alone in a desert, their empty window frames on the top floor open to the sky. Following Madison downtown from there, I came upon blocks that are razed completely on either side—the naked grid as it was laid down in 1811. That morning, the wind blew the way it blows in bleak rural places. Shards of brick—remnants of demolished houses—gave the terrain the reddish look of the desert in Utah. The effect of the brick remnants was to blur the distinction between the architecture and its surroundings, as in places like the Moroccan desert, and northern Portugal, where the houses are made out of materials taken from the earth in that very site and so blend with the ground. Garbage had been blown into drifts, especially in the westernmost block, which was surrounded by a chain-link fence. Pieces clustered up against the fence assumed an iconographic intensity, a feeling of trapped souls or fugitive ghosts. Across the reddish shards of the unfenced block I saw, faraway-seeming, tiny, and straining into the wind, a woman pushing a baby in a stroller, to what destination it was hard to imagine.

South of this wasteland I came upon a casita, a rough plywood shelter sitting on cinder blocks in the middle of a vacant lot, also enclosed by chain link. The sides of this casita were open to waist level; it looked like a rustic structure in a remote tropical place near the sea. Hanging from the struts were various objects: a fancy sombrero, a small facsimile of a hot-air balloon with a mouse in the basket, Christmas wreaths. Steps up to the open doorway were guarded by two seated rag



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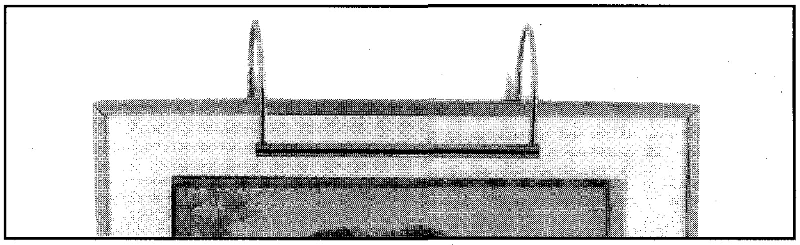

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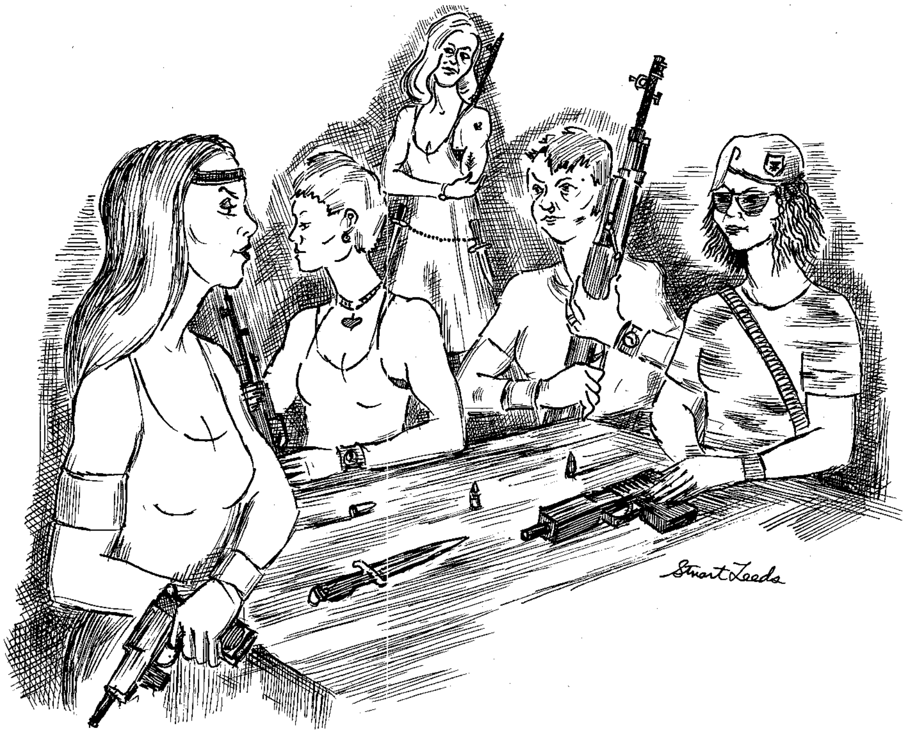
dolls, black-faced, in neon-pink hats, and clothes of a paisley material. On the ground around the shelter, other objects—plastic pumpkins, a Superman figure, a plaster version of a terra-cotta Indian head—were placed in a way that made them interesting, like the ritualistic placement of rocks in a Japanese garden. Most arresting of all, however, were three medium-sized reproductions of landscapes in ornate gold frames, covered in clear plastic for protection, hanging on a white-painted brick wall at the back of the lot. One was of a sylvan scene of cows in a French Academic composition; one was of horses with vast mountains in the background, in a style reminiscent of the Hudson River School; and the third, smaller, was of the interior of a redwood forest. A placard affixed to the chain link identified this little world as "Peaceful Valley."

SOME casitas are simply shacks, and most of them are like little clubs—they are places to socialize. I also saw several that looked as if they might be primary dwellings. Almost all are decorated in some way, but some, like Peaceful Valley, can be seen as artistic installations of a kind, in which banal, artificial objects become fascinating because of their context, though to say even this much belies the unself-conscious, spontaneous nature of the casitas. There is no irony in the use of these objects, as there is in the sophisticated art exhibited at the Museo del Barrio, in which one also sees, occasionally, trinkets, religious images, or banal commercial objects—a scavenger aesthetic that is both amusing and arresting.

The Museo, now at Fifth Avenue and 104th Street, sprang up in the heart of the Barrio—it was situated there for a long time and collected and exhibited only Puerto Rican artists. Consequently, it has roots in the community; it sponsors, for example, a Three Kings' Day parade, a popular yearly event in the neighborhood. Yet it also belongs on the Museum Mile that includes the Metropolitan and Guggenheim Museums and the Museum of the City of New York, which is right next to the Museo, at 103rd Street. Having expanded its mandate to include the work of artists from all over Latin America, the Museo fills a gap in the international spectrum of curatorship in the city. In this, as an institution, the Museo truly belongs to both worlds.

Civitas, a citizens' organization based on the Upper East Side, also spans the divide, but from the perspective of planning and zoning—taking on the physical nature of the split. It consistently examines the transition between the neighborhoods, conducting a study of Madison Avenue straight on up to 125th Street, for example, or considering the Ninety-sixth Street corridor with the



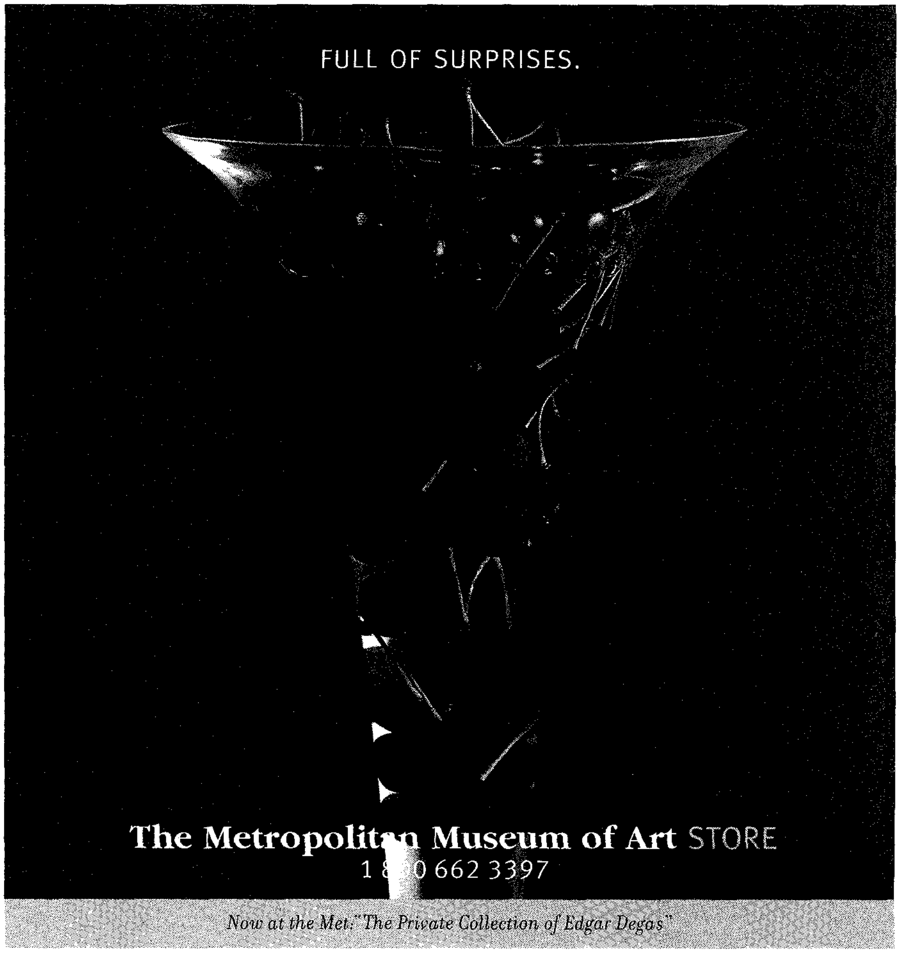
"We've gathered enough. Let's hunt."

needs of both neighborhoods in mind.

Then, there is Central Park, which extends from Fifty-ninth Street to 110th Street, well into Harlem—literally common ground. Engineered and designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in the mid-nineteenth century, it is both an artifact and a work of art, the creation of a pastoral landscape in the English Romantic tradition—truly a painting into which one can step. For a long time, the Park above Ninety-sixth Street, and especially in the Hundreds, was deserted, overgrown, and dangerous: the Harlem Meer, a lake at the northern edge, was silted up with garbage—the same shopping cart protruded from the muck for years. Today, because of the work of the Central Park Conservancy, a private charity, the northern part of the Park is of a piece with the rest. The Harlem Meer now looks like a picture out of a storybook, with a bright-painted cottagelike structure on its edge and a flock of ducks that banks perfectly over blue waters in which, on still days, a prison that towers over Central Park North is reflected. Signs prohibit fires: it was once so wild here that people roasted whole pigs—a favorite Puerto Rican dish—over bonfires with impunity.

The government, of course, is the only enterprise that is truly equal to the scale of the divide. But in the last decade the sense that government can and should strive to bring about social and economic justice has lapsed to the point where that aspect of our political imagination has fallen into neglect—into a dreary wilderness akin to that of the Harlem Meer before its restoration. Standing on the island at Park and Ninety-sixth Street, one cannot contemplate the Harlem vista for long without taking in an atmospheric sadness, the residue of defeated visions—of the failure of good intentions, epitomized eloquently by the stands of public housing.

THERE is another kind of common ground that I discovered in my travels across the line, however, one that is more important than art, or architecture, or even political institutions, and is the ground on which political life dedicated to equality must be based. This is the commonality of experience. Elsie Aidinoff, née Vanderbilt, who has taught and volunteered in Harlem for three decades but lives on the Upper East Side and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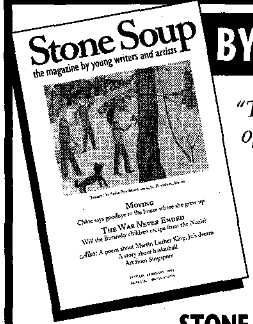

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finds herself from time to time in the venues of the extremely wealthy, makes the observation that over the years she has come to see the similarities between the worlds rather than the differences—that she has seen extraordinary, inexplicable courage in the face of the hardships that life can bring on both sides of the line, and, equally, spinelessness. She has noticed, too, the deleterious effect that not needing to work has on both the very rich and the welfare-dependent poor, and also the way that she as a mother sometimes feels more closely connected with a mother in Harlem than with a person on the Upper East Side who is not a parent.

Stephen Kurtz, a psychotherapist who practiced for many years both in prosperous venues and in Harlem, told me that, in terms of the interior landscape of people's lives, the divide does not show up. Suffering, he said, is the same on both sides of it, as is his job, which is to be with people in their suffering. He didn't mean that as many people suffer the emotional anguish of dying prematurely from AIDS on the Upper East Side as in East Harlem. What he meant was that the agony of dying young in East Harlem is no different from that of dying young on the Upper East Side, or—more to the point, more subtly—that people respond in a wide variety of ways to the same conditions but that the variety of response seems to have nothing to do with class or economic circumstances.

Kurtz allowed that one difference did show up from his point of view: while middle-class kids have any number of second chances, inner-city kids often have none. One bad mistake and they are lost, as Elsie Aidinoff observed of adults as well: families in poverty live on a brink where one misfortune—the breakup of a marriage, an illness, the loss of a job—sends the family headlong into disaster. "The older couple of kids may have made it, but the others are lost," she says. ("Lost" is a common term among people who work with kids in this territory.) Kurtz's observation fillets the issue in an exact way: it is precisely *because* it is the same for a rich mother to watch her child fail as it is for a poor one that it is intolerable for an Upper East Side child to be given any number of second chances while the Harlem child makes one mistake and ends up in jail—and thence, almost inevitably, on a destructive life course, or dead.

APPROACHING Ninety-sixth Street and Park Avenue through Carnegie Hill, I became conscious of a secluded feeling there, a quietness that comes from being at a distance from midtown with little through traffic to and from East Harlem: in a way, the nearby border of East Harlem might be the shore of a sea. There is a sense of older, less aggressive wealth here, and of discretion. Perhaps because it is a neighborhood where there is some social continuity between the generations, in certain midday moments, in a shift in the light, or in the silence created by a pause in traffic, the apartment buildings can seem to sag a little with the emotional weight of all the family life that has taken place within them—more, really, than a building can reasonably be expected to absorb. In that passing moment of candor, of tiredness, the buildings seem childishly dated, their authority thin, the defense they offer against the elemental facts of life that befall us all pitifully penetrable.

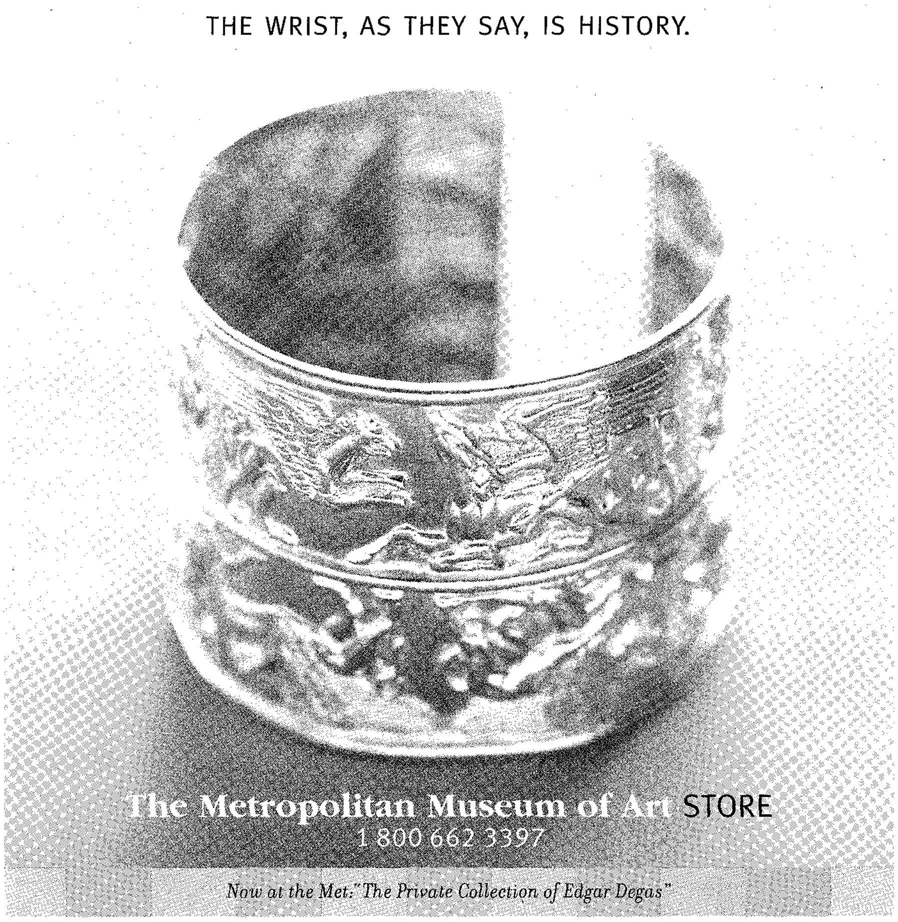
Then, beginning around two-thirty in the afternoon, massing herds of children begin to appear outside the numerous private schools in Carnegie Hill. With their teachers standing around the doors, and their mothers and nannies on the outer edges, they seem to be enclosed in a ring of safety and belonging. The mothers and children, or nannies and children, or children alone drift out into the neighborhood, and then one sees that the ring of safety includes all of Carnegie Hill: they buy snacks and eat them as they walk along or, in clement weather, as they sit in chairs set outside stores. Two little boys press their noses against the window of William Greenberg's, a bakery of the highest order, looking at schnecken—Greenberg's famous cinnamon rolls and an after-school favorite.

In December, Christmas trees decorated with white lights are placed on the malls all the way up Park Avenue from Forty-ninth Street to Ninety-sixth Street. This is a New York tradition that is less famous, perhaps, than the tree at Rockefeller Center, yet more resonant in feeling. Certainly it belongs to all New Yorkers, not just residents of the Upper East Side. I learned only recently that the practice was initiated in 1945 by Mrs. Stephen Clark, a resident of Park Avenue, who was married to the heir to the Singer sewing-machine fortune. In that year, Mrs. Clark lost a son in the war; the trees were a memorial to all the men from the City of New York who had died overseas.

The trail of starry firs comes to an end at Ninety-sixth Street, but no one would think for a moment that because of this they honor a casualty from East Harlem any the less, or that his mother's grief is in any way less than Mrs. Clark's was. Nor could anyone imagine the memorial being conceived in any other than an inclusive way. And yet when it comes to the less heroic kinds of suffering, imposed in larger doses by poverty but common to all, that sense of commonality often fails.

Of course, it is not just suffering that runs across the line like the grid: it is joy and humor; it is all of organic human life with its infinite richness, a richness that so far outdistances the richness that money confers that it, too, confounds the boundary. Although in one sense the Upper East Side is a beautiful neighborhood in contrast to the often raw ugliness of parts of East Harlem, it is even true that beauty, in the sense of the Joycean poetry of the world, travels across the line as obliviously as the grid does. A child emerging in wonder from a shop where plaster statuary is being made, the tiny lights that line the window of a video store blinking wildly in late-afternoon light, a woman in a kerchief sitting on a small, low bench outside a funeral home, almost lost in the pails of flowers around her: life is life wherever it is, inherently equal in a way that mere social and economic differences could never alter.

The late afternoon is a time that is particularly susceptible to life's magic spells: farther along that day, I saw a brick wall at the back of a casita on which a blue sky with clouds had been painted. On this mural, tall, narrow birdhouses in variegated colors had been placed at slight angles, creating a vertiginous effect. The painted sky was honeyed with real sun, and real birds flew to and from the birdhouses. In a big scruffy lot next door, vacant so long that trees had grown to maturity, a bonfire was reaching the point where a base of red-hot coals had built up, and a small group of men stood around the entrance of the casita smoking, waiting till the moment was right to start roasting a pig. ♦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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

THE BIG HITTER

To buy the Los Angeles Dodgers, Rupert Murdoch must convince Major League owners that he holds baseball's best interests at heart. But some fear the game's already over.

BY CONNIE BRUCK

FROM his office in the upper reaches of Dodger Stadium, Peter O'Malley has a sweeping view of the storied field: its velvety grass, its ribbon of well-raked, tawny dirt, its tiers of orange, blue, and yellow bleachers, and, in a single, quaint nod to commercialism, two well-placed Coca-Cola signs. Everything is immaculate, Spartan, almost incandescent, and virtually unchanged since Peter's father, Walter O'Malley, built the stadium for the team he had infamously abducted from Brooklyn forty years ago. Indeed, in an era when the newest baseball stadiums feature such an array of upscale restaurants, video arcades, and high-tech sports games that they are really a hybrid of stadium and amusement park, everything about this ballpark—from the usherettes' shirt-waisted uniforms to the concession-stand signs ("Dodger Dogs" written in a flowing script) to the rotary phone in the executive offices' waiting area—suggests a place that time forgot.

It is one in which Peter O'Malley, who has presided over this domain since his father died, in 1979, seems altogether at home. Formal in manner and dress—always wearing a jacket and tie, even on casual-dress Fridays, and colorless-rimmed glasses, and with his hair parted and combed carefully to the side—O'Malley seems earnest, a bit fusty, unfailingly polite but seigneurial as well, his speech invaded by baseball metaphors ("Are you on first base? Are you still in the batter's box?") and sprinkled with dated colloquialisms ("It's gotta be a wow!"). Indeed, he seems more a character from a vintage Jimmy Stewart movie than a baseball entrepreneur of the nineties. "I'm Dodgers for the rest of my life," he told me during one of several conversations we had this fall. "That can't change."

Nonetheless, he announced last January that he was putting the Dodgers up for sale. Many people in the sports world who knew O'Malley were shocked; and they were more surprised still when he announced, some four months later, that his chosen buyer was the Fox Group, a subsidiary of the News Corporation, controlled by Rupert Murdoch. The two men could hardly be more different. How could the deeply traditional O'Malley, self-declared keeper of the flame, custodian of the last bastion of traditionalism in that most tradition-bound of American sports, be selling his team to Murdoch, ruthless avatar of the future, whose consuming desire is, in the words of one former partner, "to take the world by satellite"—someone allergic to traditional, establishment institutions, and identified with rapacity more than with any civic virtue?

The price, which was reported last May to be about $350 million but has recently been put closer to $311 million, was widely considered to have provided an antidote to whatever qualms O'Malley may have felt about Murdoch. "The O'Malleys have gone for the gold a second time," a sports executive lamented, alluding, of course, to Walter O'Malley's betrayal of Brooklyn.

O'Malley told me that he had no reservations about turning his family's legacy over to Fox. He insisted that Fox, the corporate entity, was the acquirer, and not Murdoch. He said he believed that his decision would prove to be in the best interests not only of the Dodgers but of baseball as a whole; that Murdoch would move the game to a new level; and that he had become convinced of that on his and Murdoch's first evening together, when he went to dinner at Murdoch's home. "I was astonished at his depth of knowledge—with all he's got going on—about the Dodgers," O'Malley said. When I asked him what, exactly, had so impressed him, he replied, "He knew about Vin Scully, Mike Piazza, Hideo Nomo, Chan Ho Park"—a long-standing Dodgers broadcaster ("The Voice of the Dodgers") and three star players.

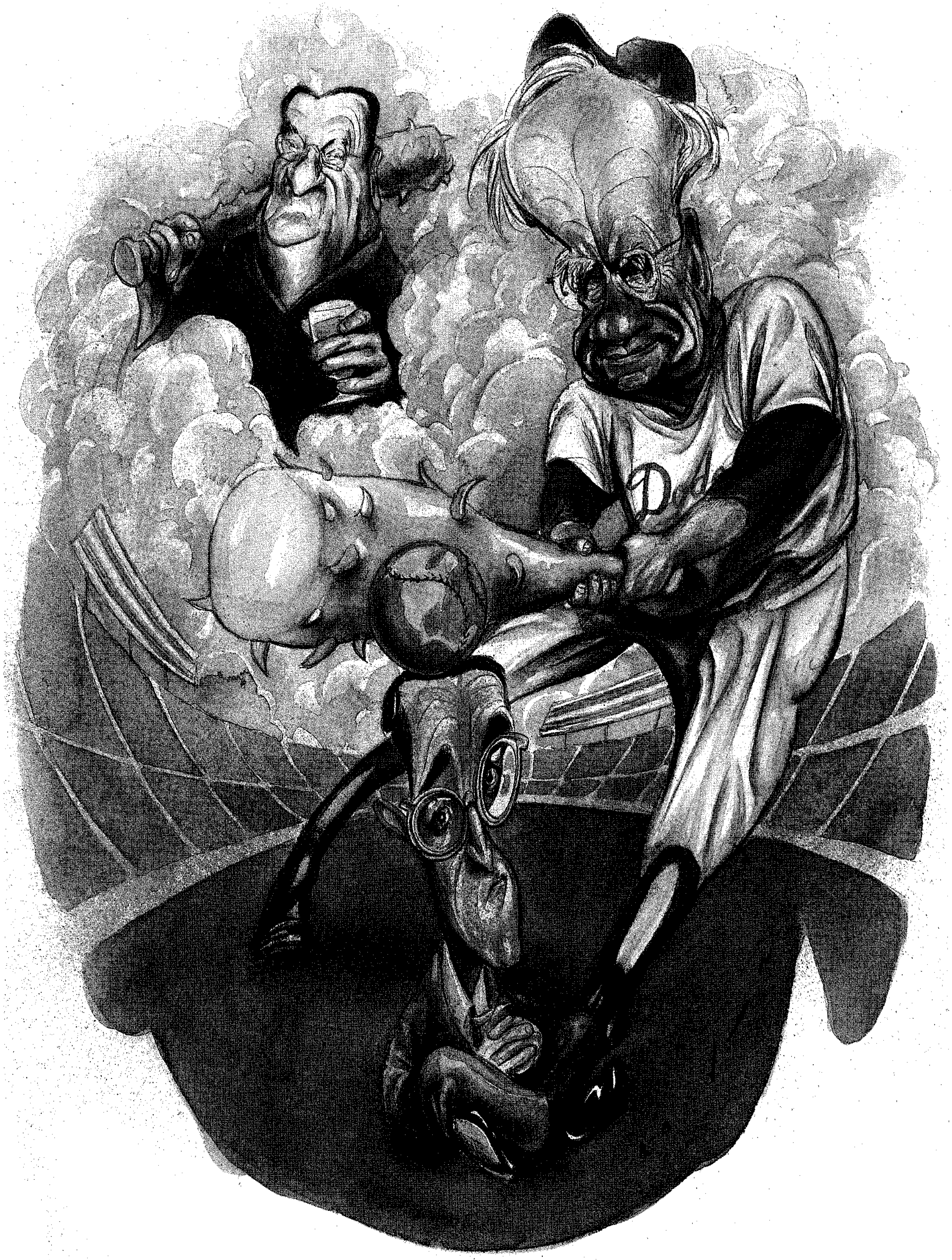
He also said that he and Murdoch had found a quick common interest in discussing the promotion of baseball internationally—O'Malley's "biggest love," which was engendered in 1956, when his family took their first trip to Asia, accompanying the Dodgers on a thirty-day exhibition series in Japan. Under O'Malley's aegis, the Dodgers have developed and signed foreign players (Nomo and Park), hosted foreign teams, played exhibition games in a number of countries, and helped to bring baseball to the Olympics. However, owing at least in part to the turmoil of the last five years—in particular, the disastrous 1994-95 players' strike, which resulted in the cancellation of the World Series and fan disillusionment—professional baseball has been less successful in establishing a beachhead internationally than any other major American sport. And, O'Malley told me, he had found with no other prospective buyer the "common ground" that he found with Murdoch on this issue. The two talked ruefully about "how baseball is missing opportunities internationally," he said. "We're behind basketball, behind football, behind hockey—we're fourth in that race. That is sad to me. And there's no doubt in my mind that Fox—and Mr. Murdoch—will bring that to the party."

O'Malley went on, eagerly, "He's a citizen of L.A., but even more, he's a citizen of the world. He will help internationalize the game more than anyone else on the horizon."

Summing up his bond with Murdoch, O'Malley said, "The first time we met, we had a common interest, a common focus." Smiling, he went on, "It was easy. First date. Yes."

However primed O'Malley was, and however eager he was to sell, he was not a free agent. In order to consummate the deal, he needed the blessing of Major League Baseball—which is granted only

STEVE BRODNER



One person who knows both men says that pairing Murdoch and O'Malley is like "putting a black widow in with a butterfly."

NOW LET THE CLUTCH OUT SLOWLY WHILE YOU GIVE IT A LITTLE GAS, AND IT WON'T LURCH SO MUCH.

after an exhaustive approval process and a vote by all thirty team owners. Murdoch seems likely to win the vote in the end, but it won't have been easy. So far, his vetting has been fractious and bedevilled by one controversy after another. The level of ferment suggests that this is indeed a watershed transaction for baseball, and not just because it augurs a new era of corporate ownership. After all, the Tribune Company, the Walt Disney Company, and Time Warner have all had to be approved by Major League Baseball. Nor is it merely because it signals the waning of the era of family ownership—the Dodgers being the last family-owned team whose revenues are its owners' sole support. What makes this transaction so different, ultimately, is the identity of the acquirer. For some in baseball it is a hope, and for others it is a fear, but it is something on which, in any event, all can agree: once Rupert Murdoch gets in the door, the realm of baseball will never be the same.

THERE has long been a confusion at the heart of baseball—national pastime, idyllic imprint of youth, mirror of American character, creator of heroes, enduring communal event—about whether it is indeed the special game that we have always believed it to be or merely a business. The confusion was reflected in Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.,'s decision, in 1922, that Major League Baseball was exempt from antitrust laws, because "exhibitions of base ball" are "purely state affairs." That exemption has enabled baseball, more than any other sport, to operate much like a private club, and has given the owners the freedom to make collective decisions that are clearly anticompetitive.

And within the happy oligopoly that baseball owners enjoyed during much of this century, no owner held as much sway as Walter O'Malley. Baseball was his dominion. Charles Bronfman, of Seagram, who once owned the Montreal Expos, told me, "In the beginning, Walter O'Malley was the definitive leader. It was his only business. He understood his fellow-owners—he worked them—and no commissioner could get appointed without Walter's approval. He was brilliant. He made sure each owner got what he wanted—and he made sure Walter got what *he* wanted." The baseball commissioner whom Walter O'Malley virtually installed was Bowie Kuhn. And after Walter O'Malley died, "Peter's first battle was his attempt to keep Kuhn from being ousted," Bronfman went on. "I said to Peter, 'These guys' "—owners intent on ousting Kuhn—" 'are not going to play by Marquess of Queensberry rules. If you want it, you will have to get down on the mat.' But he wouldn't do it. He couldn't."

By the time Peter Ueberroth became commissioner, in 1984, the long-lived O'Malley hegemony had come to an end. It was not that under Peter O'Malley's aegis the Dodgers' legacy was squandered. On the contrary, he continued to run it as a first-class operation: putting a competitive team on the field, keeping ticket prices and food prices down, offering fans great entertainment value. But he did not have the imagination or the entrepreneurial drive to exploit the potential of the Dodgers as times changed and different opportunities appeared. "He never maximized the opportunities of the brand," one baseball veteran commented. "Steinbrenner is maximizing the Yankee brand. Ted Turner is maximizing the Braves. The Dodgers are arguably the best brand, but their TV deals are not good, their licensing is not good. You may be surprised to hear me refer to the Dodgers as a brand. But it *is* a brand. Koufax is not a baseball player—he's a Dodger."

And although the O'Malley name continued for a time to evoke Walter's combination of charisma, political intuition, and sharp dealing, that eventually receded among his fellow-owners, to be replaced by a growing sense of frustration, and even contempt. At meetings, Jerry Reinsdorf, the owner of the Chicago White Sox (and also of the Chicago Bulls basketball team), and other owners began to refer to Peter O'Malley as Peter Brown, the point being that owners shouldn't be dazzled by the O'Malley name.

Many owners thought Peter O'Malley was patrician, élitist, and insensitive to the plight of the less fortunate, small-market teams. The issue that became a kind of litmus test in the early nineties was revenue sharing—a formula by which the more profitable teams distribute funds to the less profitable, in an attempt to help equalize the widely disparate revenue streams that flow to big-market and small-market teams, so that the small market can remain competitive. O'Malley was resistant to the level of revenue sharing that the small-market-team owners thought was fair. Of the members of the big-market/small-market committee, "Peter O'Malley was the worst," one owner recalled. "The anger we felt... Peter was supposed to represent tradition, but there was no leadership there.... You can't have a league when three-quarters of your partners are drowning."

Peter Ueberroth stepped down in 1989. The new baseball commissioner, A. Bartlett Giamatti, died after five months on the job, and his replacement, Fay Vincent, was ousted by the owners after just three years. The Milwaukee Brewers' owner, Bud Selig, became acting commissioner (a post he still holds), and some thought of him as Reinsdorf's factotum. In any event, O'Malley is said by one owner to have bemoaned the fact that baseball was being controlled by "this cabal from the Great Lakes region"—Selig, Reinsdorf, and Carl Pohlad, who had bought the Minnesota Twins in the mid-eighties. In 1994, O'Malley was proposed for appointment to the eight-person executive council but did not receive enough votes to become a member.

Meanwhile, the business of baseball was changing radically, mostly because of the escalation of players' salaries. For example, the Dodgers' payroll grew from $11 million in 1985 to $42 million in 1992. Then, in 1994, came the protracted strike, from which baseball has only recently begun to recover. The Dodgers lost money that year. For many teams, it's a painfully common experience: of the twenty-eight teams in the major leagues before the latest expansion, only five or six publicly admit to being profitable. For O'Malley, though, it was unnerving. One person who had quite a few dealings with him at that time told me, "He had to borrow money, and he was worried about his whole net worth going down the tubes."

Steve Greenberg, who was the deputy commissioner under Fay Vincent and is now the president of the Classic Sports Network, told me recently, "Peter had run the Dodgers in an old-school fashion. He didn't deal with any free agents for a long time, didn't do deferred-compensation deals for a long time. A lot of teams got in trouble because they had mountains of deferred compensation building up, and then they had to borrow to make good on all the deals they'd made. But the Dodgers always operated on a cash-and-carry basis—no debt. And the year of the strike, when he lost money and had to borrow, it was hard."

For O'Malley, moreover, the situation of financial risk was compounded by his exclusion from decision-making in baseball. (He was, he told one friend, "in Siberia.") Bob Graziano, a Dodgers vice-president, says, "It is true that Peter felt he had less ability to influence the course of events—at the same time that the risk was becoming greater and greater."

What looked like a solution to O'Malley's dilemma appeared suddenly in August, 1995. Los Angeles had just lost its N.F.L. teams, the Raiders and the Rams; and the city's mayor, Richard Riordan, asked whether O'Malley would be interested in constructing a football stadium adjacent to Dodger Stadium, in the area known as Chavez Ravine—more than three hundred acres that Walter O'Malley had obtained in his extraordinarily sweet deal with the City of Los Angeles in 1957. Peter O'Malley began working on a plan, in which, he says, he invested about $1.5 million. The football stadium was to provide a way for the O'Malleys—Peter and his sister, Terry Seidler—to diversify their interests, not only by investing in the stadium and an N.F.L. franchise but also by bringing in a partner for the football enterprise and for the Dodgers as well. According to someone familiar with the proposed transaction, that partner would most likely have been Lew Wasserman, the former chairman of M.C.A.

The idea of the stadium entranced O'Malley. "For some reason, building the stadium appealed to me more than running and owning a football team," he told me. One person who is very close to O'Malley and has spent many hours discussing the proposed stadium with him said, "He wanted to make his own mark. His father made his by moving the Dodgers out there, and he wanted to make his by building a great stadium. That would be his mark."

Dodger Stadium's Echo and Elysian Park neighbors and their councilman, however, were strongly opposed to the prospect of another stadium in their midst; demonstrations were held, and old angers reignited about Walter O'Malley's having razed a Mexican barrio in Chavez Ravine. In any event, after a year had passed, Riordan asked O'Malley to abandon his plans and instead support an effort to construct a new stadium at the Coliseum, the landmark site that had housed the 1932 and the 1984 Olympic Games. Some said the Mayor had struck a political deal requiring him to throw his support to the Coliseum, but one person close to the Mayor's office insisted that if O'Malley had been more aggressive and politically adept—if he had been able, in Charles Bronfman's words, to get down on the mat—he might have succeeded in seizing the opportunity before it slipped away. Graziano, the Dodgers executive, summed up the episode differently, and heatedly: "Peter has always been a good corporate citizen. He was bending over backward to do something the city had asked him to do. I think he felt after going through that—spending the time and money he did—it was a difficult ending."

For Murdoch, however, that difficult ending provided the perfect beginning. As it happened, Fox was then in negotiations to sublicense the local rights to a number of Dodgers games, and a Fox executive has told me that it was during talks related to those negotiations, in late 1996, that the conversations leading to the Fox purchase began. For Fox, this executive said, "it makes total sense for the football stadium to be there," meaning in Chavez Ravine. "Peter felt, You guys can do it. You have the clout in the city I don't have. You have the stomach for the political fight." O'Malley himself has told me that he believed that once he had Fox as his partner the city would come back to him.

Murdoch's approach to the Dodgers bore all his trademarks. "Rupert is the best buyer," a Fox executive told me. "There's more to buying than just paying money." Murdoch's timing was certainly impeccable: he spotted the opportunity and apparently moved speedily to snatch it. He exerted his famous dangerous charm, and it was hardly surprising that O'Malley should have fallen on the "first date." One person who knows both men, and has had extensive dealings with Murdoch, says that the pairing of Murdoch and O'Malley was tantamount to "putting a black widow in with a butterfly."

A man who was formerly associated with Murdoch for many years told me, "As a buyer, he understands the seller—and, whatever the guy's trying to do, he crafts his offer that way. He is able to see what the person most wants out of the deal." With O'Malley, therefore, Murdoch appealed to his longstanding "biggest love," international baseball; offered a way to resuscitate O'Malley's dream of a football stadium; and may have encouraged and helped to facilitate other of O'Malley's enthusiasms. (O'Malley told me that he is currently trying to start a baseball school in China, and he exclaimed, "We'll probably get the first one out of the People's Republic!" In addition, he may be buying, for his children, a baseball team in Australia, which is Murdoch's native country and still a vital part of his empire.) And Murdoch urged O'Malley to stay on with the Dodgers, for an indeterminate period. O'Malley told me, "Whether I'm here one year or five years, I want to help Fox. I read everything about it in the newspaper—whether it's about publishing or movies or sports. I want to get up to speed."

Many people who know Murdoch predict that O'Malley's tenure will not be long. Early in his career, Murdoch established his reputation as someone whose word could not be trusted—someone who used and discarded people who had been critical to his advance. In 1969, he gained control of *News of the World*, a London Sunday tabloid, by persuading its principal owners, the Carr family, to reject a richer offer from Robert Maxwell and run the paper in partnership with him; then he immediately ousted the Carrs. In the late seventies, after Murdoch's friend Clay Felker, who was the editor and founder of the magazine *New York*, told Murdoch he was having trouble with his board, Murdoch went behind Felker's back and acquired *New York*. And within Murdoch's own organization executives—particularly high-ranking ones—have been notoriously expendable. O'Malley is already being spoken of disparagingly by a close Murdoch adviser, and a baseball official says that Fox executives "have told me that they're replacing Peter with another guy," adding, "They will get rid of him so fast his head will spin."

Nevertheless, for all Murdoch's cunning, his chief weapon has generally been his readiness to outbid all rivals—as he did, once again, with the Dodgers, hitting a note so high that no one else could reach it. A ranking Fox executive explains, "The price was so high . . . it was much too expensive for anyone who didn't have another business reason."

For many, the desire to own the mythic Dodgers would have been fuelled by a mixture of business judgment and sentiment. But sentiment—or even a passing interest in the game—was not a factor in Murdoch's calculus. "Rupert is not a baseball fan. I don't know if he's ever been to a Dodgers game," said Chase Carey, the co-chief operating officer of the News Corporation. And David Hill, the Fox Broadcasting C.E.O., who started Fox Sports for Murdoch, concurred, saying of his boss, "He's not a fan of anything except business. He has about thirty-three seconds of small talk. He's always focussing on that cosmic 'What if?' "

In fact, what impelled Murdoch once again to bid so high that all others receded was his fervent conviction about the value of sports programming. Sports, Murdoch has concluded, is his lodestone. He made this plain at the News Corporation's annual meeting in October of last year, when he declared, "We have the long-term rights in most countries to major sporting events, and we will be doing in Asia what we intend to do elsewhere in the world—that is, use sports as a battering ram and a lead offering in all our pay-television operations."

Peter Chernin, the president and C.O.O. of the News Corporation, told me, "This company is so defined by sports right now because what we have found in building our worldwide TV ventures—which are essentially pay-TV—is that the two things that drive them are movies and sports. And sports is the more important." Chernin, Carey, and Hill all articulate a kind of in-house teleology: as the entertainment future offers a dizzying array of choices, sports (and especially its big events) will have a uniquely powerful appeal, because in an increasingly fragmented society sports is tribal, serving as a community bond, and is *live*. "Sports is the final frontier of reality on TV," Hill says grandly. "Because it's unscripted and the white knight doesn't always get to kiss the girl."

MURDOCH and his team of Fox executives became true believers in the power of sports through two major confirming experiences. The first occurred when Murdoch, in 1992, spent $550 million for the right to broadcast Britain's Premier League soccer—and the result so expanded the viewership of British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB), in which his company then owned a fifty-per-cent stake, that it was transformed from a high-risk, floundering venture into one of the News Corporation's most spectacular successes. Then, in 1993, Murdoch proved that the same principle—namely, the almost alchemic properties of sports programming—could be applied in this country, too. Here it was the rights to broadcast the National Football Conference games—rights that at the time were owned by CBS but were about to expire. George Vradenburg, who was an executive vice-president at Fox and had earlier been at CBS, recalled that Murdoch asked him whether he thought Laurence Tisch, then the owner of CBS, would let the rights go. "I said only if Tisch thought Rupert was a crazy man. So Rupert bid for the rights significantly over what CBS was willing to pay." He paid $1.6 billion. "He later wrote off hundreds of millions, so he overpaid in normal financial terms. But it put Fox Broadcasting increasingly on the map." Murdoch's avidity for sports programming led him also to acquire the national broadcast rights to professional hockey in 1994 and baseball (with NBC) in 1995.

Sometimes, however, he was confronted with situations where the rights he coveted were not available to him, no matter what he was prepared to pay. What he did there, when he could not have his way, is a source of profound worry to many in baseball today as they contemplate his purchase of the Dodgers. In 1994, in his native Australia, Murdoch was desperate to acquire the rights to rugby—a game that was a passionate national preoccupation there, much as baseball used to be here—but the official Australian Rugby League (A.R.L.) already had a pay-TV contract with a company owned by Murdoch's longtime rival, Kerry Packer. Ultimately, taking advantage of some player dissatisfaction within the A.R.L., the News Corporation's Australian subsidiary staged a midnight raid (led by Lachlan Murdoch, Rupert's son, who was then twenty-three), offering players huge bonuses and multiples of their existing paychecks if they would join News's Super League. An Australian federal judge later castigated Murdoch's move for its "secrecy, suddenness, and deception," and found that it had been aimed at leaving the A.R.L. "defenseless against a virtual takeover by News." The judge's decision to stop the launch of the new league was later overturned, and Murdoch's teams began their first season this spring. But he had triggered a civil war in rugby (the A.R.L. fought back by offering wild salaries of its own), and the entire spectacle gave rise to such disgust among fans that attendance at both Super League and A.R.L. games has plummeted. (The News Corporation has reportedly lost more than $200 million so far.)

Ken Arthurson, the former A.R.L. chairman, told the New York *News* in September, "This battle split the entire country, fathers against sons, neighbors against neighbors, footballers against footballers. It ruined a lot of lives, mine included. And all because Rupert Murdoch wanted to control a sport that belonged to the people and was selfish enough to think he could own it for pay television."

Public censure has never deterred Murdoch. Scorn has been heaped upon him frequently in the course of his career; he has been publicly characterized as evil incarnate. But one friend of Murdoch's recalled a conversation with him in the early eighties, when Murdoch was attempting a hostile takeover of Warner Communications: "The papers were printing all this awful stuff about him, calling him names. I said, 'Doesn't it bother you, what they say about you?' He said, 'No, I love it! It's the staff of life!' "

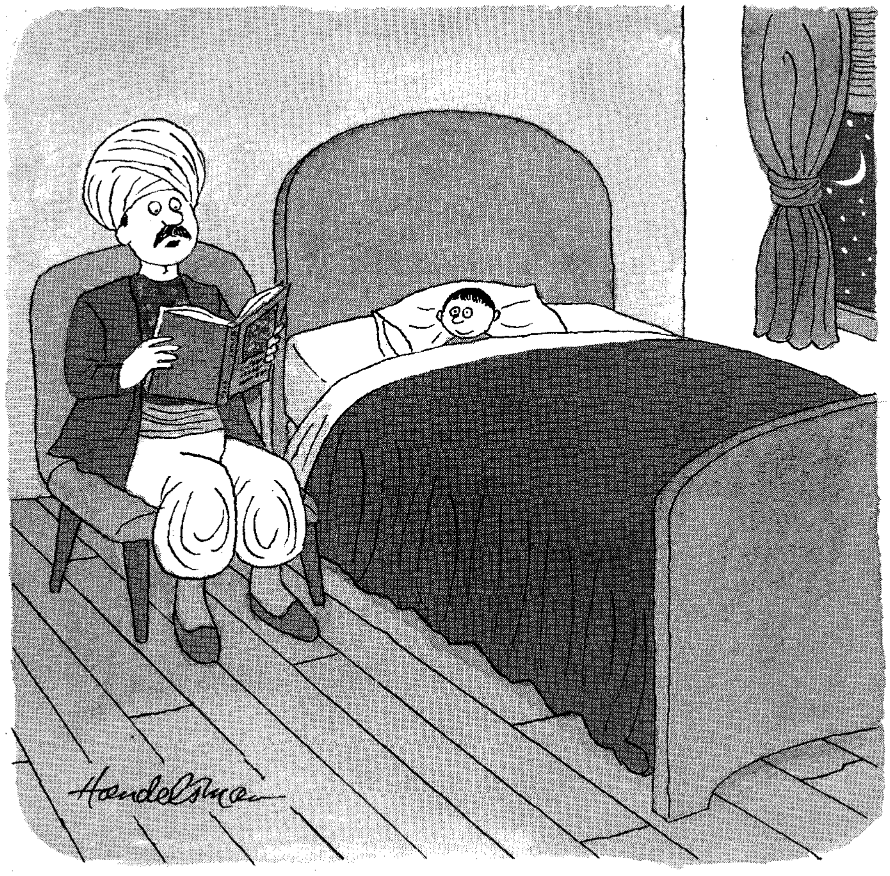
"Rupert can't resist a coup," a longtime close associate commented. Ill-fated as the Australian rugby coup turned out to be, a similar one was launched in the United States golf world at about the same time, and it was even more abortive. Promoted by the golfer Greg Norman, a World Tour, consisting of a series of three-million-dollar events in which only the world's top thirty golfers would participate, was to be organized as a challenge to the long-established P.G.A. Tour, much as the Super League had served as a challenge to the A.R.L. Here, however, when the P.G.A. Tour stated that it would not give players the necessary releases to play in the World Tour, the players chose not to defect. At that point, the World Tour's only hope was that an ongoing Federal Trade Commission investigation of the P.G.A. Tour would determine that the P.G.A. Tour's requiring releases for players to participate in competing events was a restraint of trade. But in mid-1995 the F.T.C. announced that it was dropping its antitrust investigation, whereupon the World Tour concept died.

It had been reported in the press that the World Tour would be bankrolled by "unnamed European and Asian investors" and a Fox television contract. "We never did know who was behind it," John Morris, of the P.G.A. Tour, told me. As to Fox, he added, "They said they were not. They just wanted to be a carrier if it went through. They were very straightforward about that when they met with us."

But George Vradenburg, an executive vice-president at Fox at the time of the World Tour effort, told me that it had been wholly subsidized by Fox—that "there was no other money in it." Fox had done it, he said, because "the P.G.A. Tour has a long-term relationship with CBS and NBC," and Fox was unable to break in. "It was like what Rupert did with rugby in Australia," Vradenburg noted.

IN late 1995, Murdoch made a far more significant—and more skillfully executed—move on sports programming in this country. It was one that vastly expanded his reach in both acquiring and delivering the programs: he went after regional sports networks.

This was something that Charles Dolan, the founder and chairman of the Cablevision Systems Corporation, had pioneered: owning a cable system, a sports cable channel, and sports-programming rights—a textbook case of the kind of vertical integration that has become endemic among media companies. New York is full of outspoken sports fans, but few have complained about this complex and extraordinary monopoly. What



"There lived in Baghdad a humble woodcutter named Ali Baba, who was villainously threatened by at least forty Americans."

Dolan had started, in 1976, when he founded SportsChannel, in New York, reached a kind of culmination more than two decades later with a deal that he completed last June: Cablevision then acquired most of what it did not already own of Madison Square Garden Properties, including the arena, the MSG Network, the Rangers hockey team, the Knicks basketball team, local cable rights for the Yankees, and even the New York Liberty, the new professional women's basketball team. Inasmuch as SportsChannel by that time controlled the local cable rights to Nets basketball, Islanders and Devils hockey, and Mets baseball, this deal meant that Dolan had created what Representative Charles Schumer, of New York, called, in an angry letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, "a virtual monopoly over the televised broadcasts of seven of the nine major New York professional sports teams." (It was allowed to go forward.)

In the early nineties, John Malone, the president and C.E.O. of Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI), had begun to follow Dolan's lead, creating a regional network of sports cable channels through a TCI subsidiary called Liberty Media Corporation. It was this ready-made network that Murdoch tapped into when he and Malone, in late 1995, created a joint venture, called Fox/Liberty Sports. Through this alliance, Murdoch and Malone were gearing up to challenge ABC's ESPN, which had by this time established its dominance as the national cable sports channel. It was too late for them to challenge ESPN frontally, so they began doing it indirectly, by establishing a separate but competitive ground of their own. In fortifying their net of regional channels that feature local games, Murdoch and Malone were betting that viewers care more about seeing their home teams play than watching whatever games are on a national channel. And, most recently, this net expanded to include a major interest in Dolan's operations as well.

For Murdoch, buying the Dodgers is a vital step in building his two regional Fox Sports West networks in Southern California, and it is also a way to checkmate the now Disney-owned ESPN. Currently, Fox/Liberty Sports has locked up the local cable rights to all six of the professional sports teams in Los Angeles—the Lakers, the Kings, the Clippers, the Dodgers, and the Disney-owned Angels and Mighty Ducks. But in a couple of years, when Fox's rights to those teams expire, ESPN—having missed the opportunity to expand from a national- to a regional-channel business—will almost surely try to start a local cable sports channel, going head on against the local Fox cable channels. The value of the Dodgers to Fox when that moment comes cannot be overestimated. "Owning the team is a way of making sure you don't lose the rights," Peter Barton, the former C.E.O. of Liberty, points out.

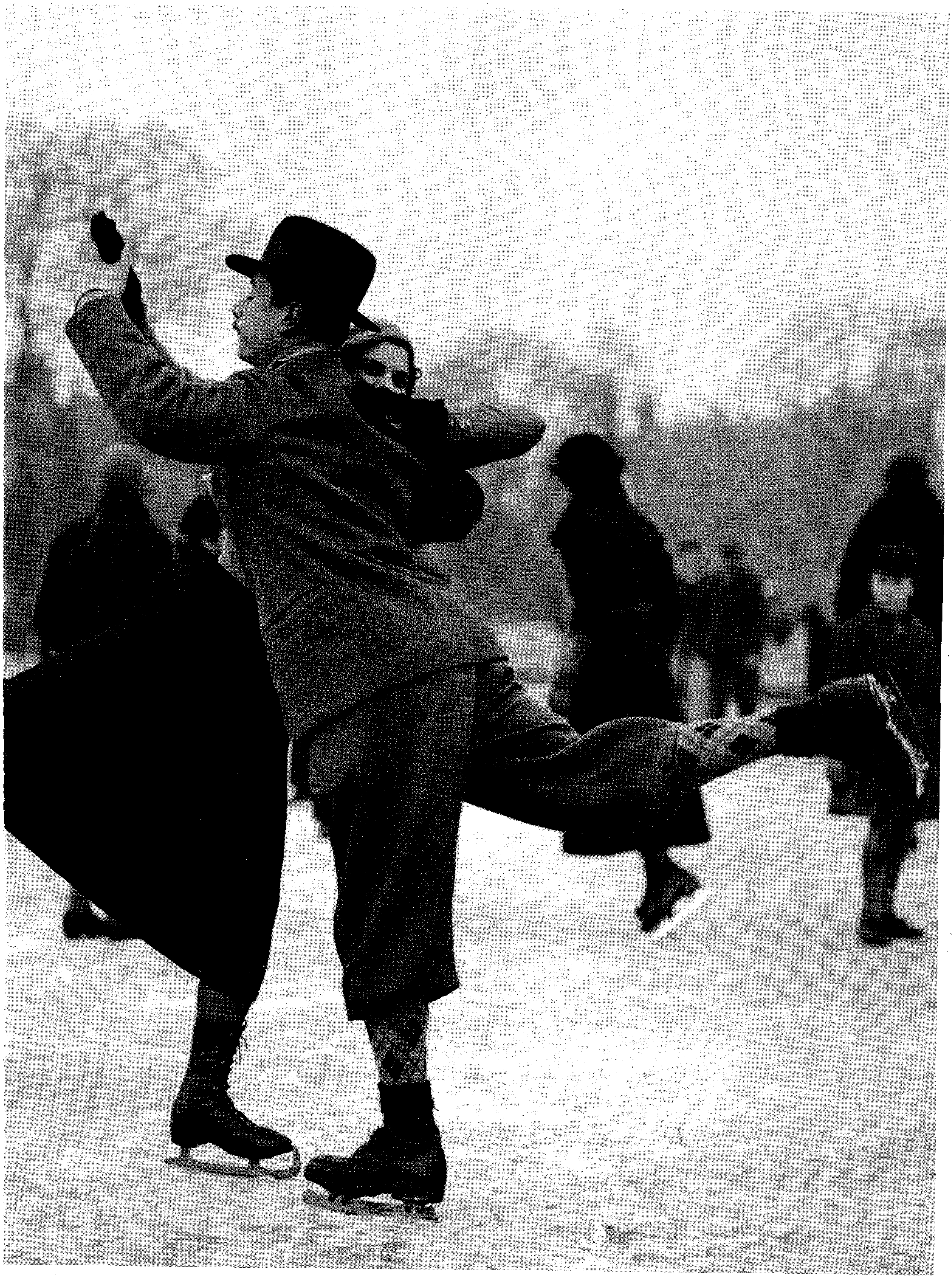
The thinking here, of course, is that once you have the rights secure, and you own the channels, you can adopt a more profitable business plan—one that, if unchecked, would mean fewer and fewer games on free TV. "Dolan is the model they are all trying to replicate," an executive who has dealt with both Dolan and Murdoch told me. Already, he said, the movement of games to cable means that the migration from free TV to some form of pay TV is now under way. "The fear is that in a market like New York, where Dolan has a stranglehold, it may mean not only all baseball games on cable but eighty-one of the games on cable and the other eighty-one on pay-per-view on cable." He added, "Taking control of sports in a market gives them the ability to charge rabid fans to watch games that you and I grew up watching for free."

This terrain is a political minefield, through which Murdoch and others will have to navigate carefully. It is difficult to imagine that the World Series, for example, could be moved from free TV to cable, let alone to pay-per-view, without inciting congressional action. But perhaps the rest of the baseball calendar will be fair game. Herbert Schlosser, a former president of NBC, who is now a senior adviser on media at Schroder & Company, said, "There are impediments, but five years from now Murdoch may be saying, 'You want to see the Dodgers? You don't have to go to the stadium. You can watch them from home—for five dollars a game.' "

And if, as many people believe, Murdoch's aim is to appropriate sports in Los Angeles as Chuck Dolan has done in New York, then the purchase of the Dodgers is only a preliminary move. Murdoch

DAVIES/HULTON GETTY

BRISKLY BALLROOM *The exhibition "A Wir*
pictures of mountain climbers, ski jumpers,



'e" runs through January at the Hulton Getty Picture Gallery, in London. Drawn from Hulton Getty's enormous archive, it includes ristmas-tree haulers, as well as this photograph, from January, 1933, of a joyful ice waltz on Whitestone Pond, Hampstead Heath.

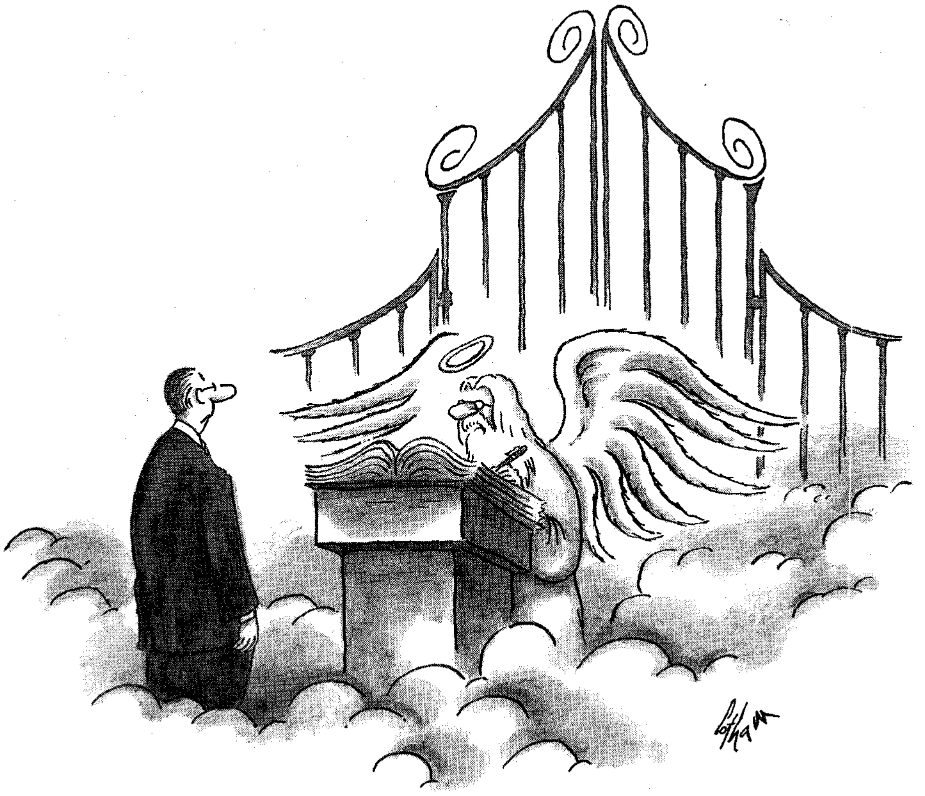
does have the cable rights to all six of the L.A. teams locked up for now, but since he doesn't own those teams he could lose the rights. Thus, he is said to be negotiating with Ed Roski and Philip Anschutz to invest in their team, the Kings, and with Jerry Buss, the owner of the Lakers; and, according to a close adviser, he would indeed like to build a football stadium adjacent to Dodger Stadium, and perhaps to have an interest in an N.F.L. franchise there.

What role O'Malley would have, if any, in that prospective stadium is not clear. But one person in sports who has dealt with both O'Malley and Murdoch has said of the continuing neighborhood opposition and protests about past injustices, "Peter was struck by it. Rupert wouldn't be. They're going to be begging for Peter O'Malley in that neighborhood. Fifteen years from now, you won't recognize it."

Owning these quasi-public assets—the baseball team, its stadium, perhaps part of the football team and the football stadium, and a stake in other teams as well—would represent a consolidation of power in one man's hands which some business leaders in L.A. find troubling. "We might as well rename the city," one protests. The fact that the man is Murdoch alarms this person even more: "He's not an Angeleno. He's an Australian—or whatever matters at any given time." George Vradenburg, the former Fox executive, said, "He's not confined to geography in the way that most people are." He was referring to Murdoch's having changed his citizenship from Australian to American in 1985 in order to build his media empire here. "He is not a citizen of L.A.—he could screw L.A. as far as he's concerned."

THE review process by Major League Baseball for team ownership is prolonged (almost as lacking in time limits as the game itself) and, some would say, unduly deliberate. Prospective buyers and sellers have long chafed at the process, but surely no previous buyers have been so temperamentally ill suited to it as Murdoch and his Fox executives are. There is poetic justice here, for if one wanted to design a perfect purgatory for them, in which they could do penance for sins of arrogance and brashness and raw aggressiveness, one could do no better than to make them subject to the will and whim of Major League Baseball—precisely the kind of establishment institution (ponderous, judicious, mindful of tradition) that Murdoch, historically, has most loved to subvert.

Because of baseball's anomalous strictures, Murdoch and O'Malley had to come to terms before Murdoch was even allowed to see the Dodgers' books; a seller may not open them to the prospective buyer until after a deal has been struck and after the ownership committee has carried out a preliminary review of the would-be buyer. Thus, O'Malley announced that he would sell the Dodgers to Fox, subject to Major League Baseball's approval, in May; by July, he still had not received permission to disclose his records.



"You faked your death once before—how do I know you're not faking it now?"

The suspicion on the Fox side was that Ted Turner, the vice-chairman of Time Warner and a self-declared foe of Murdoch's, who had publicly expressed opposition to Murdoch's buying the Dodgers, was holding up the process. Turner, the first to spot the programming value in owning a team, has broadcast the Atlanta Braves' games on his superstation channel for many years. Now, because of the Turner–Time Warner merger last year, the team is owned by Time Warner. And the ownership committee is currently chaired by a longtime Turner executive, Bill Bartholomay.

In the incestuous world of today's media conglomerates, there are few issues that do not involve overlapping interests. Since the fall of 1996, Time Warner and the News Corporation had been engaged in bitter litigation over Time Warner's refusal to carry Fox's all-news channel on its New York cable system. But in late July of this year News and Time Warner reached a settlement, in which, among other things, Time Warner agreed to carry the Fox News channel, and Fox agreed not to stand in the way of Time Warner's continuing to broadcast Braves games upon converting its TBS superstation into a cable channel. Furthermore, according to two people on the Fox side, the Fox people believed that Turner would not now oppose Murdoch's purchase of the Dodgers. "It wasn't put in writing," one of the Fox people stressed. "But it was part of it." It was no coincidence, I was told, that one week after the Time Warner–Fox settlement—and Turner's supposed concession—Bartholomay's committee finally voted to allow Fox to see the Dodgers' books and thus proceed to the next phase.

By early September, the final terms of the deal were negotiated. Only then did the really thoroughgoing investigation begin. For the next two months, baseball would request more and more documents from Fox before the file could be deemed complete.

Patience with Major League Baseball has been thin for some time now at Fox. One executive there who has worked extensively with baseball and its member-owners commented, "Baseball people are the *stupidest* in the world." Another Fox executive complained that baseball's process for the transfer of ownership was so archaic that "the application is still geared to an era when private human beings owned teams." His voice heavy with sarcasm, he added, "For example, one question was 'Have you ever been convicted of a crime?' " It also asks, "Have you ever been associated . . . with known gamblers?" This person went on to say, "The problem for baseball is, they have to grow up. They have to come to terms with corporatization." Baseball has made extensive requests for documents that reflect the depth of the News Corporation's holdings. Pointing out that a company like the News Corporation may own twenty per cent of another company that owns ten per cent of another company that owns three per cent of another, this Fox executive suggested that at a certain point the obligation for disclosure ceases. "They're immensely dogmatic in a world that is not neat and clear anymore," he concluded.

Robert Kheel, the National League's outside general counsel, is one of the lawyers involved in this transaction for baseball. (His father, the labor lawyer Theodore Kheel, represented the magazine *New York* at the time Murdoch launched his surprise attack.) Kheel, who is well versed in the arcana of baseball, says that what he has particularly enjoyed about his job is the ever-present tension between baseball as a business and as something more—in effect, a national legacy to be protected. "When you talk about the best interests of baseball," he says, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." When I asked him whether baseball's attenuated ownership-transfer process was too inefficient in today's environment, he responded, "There are many divergent interests, and there is a need to build consensus. This is a joint venture. 'Do I want this person in my joint venture?' is the question that thirty owners must ultimately address."

Kheel added, too, that a threshold issue for the ownership committee has been whether the real buyer is Fox, as the application states, or Murdoch. Murdoch's associates and O'Malley, too, have been at pains to stress that the buyer is not Murdoch but Fox, apparently on the assumption that the more Murdoch can be distanced from the process the better—and that baseball people are stupid. But the White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf, who is one of the more influential ownership-committee members, is unequivocal on this point, saying, "Clearly, you have to look at this as a purchase by Rupert Murdoch." And Kheel says, "If he's the controlling person, you have to analyze him—his finances, and him as a person." Bud Selig, the acting commissioner, says of Murdoch, "He is very controversial. Owners have concern about character. I have heard it again and again."

CONTROVERSY has been the leitmotiv of the approval process—unsurprisingly, since the clash of cultures between Fox and Major League Baseball is so profound. Moreover, the longer the period of scrutiny continues, the more interesting and vexatious are the issues that are bound to emerge; time is truly the enemy of this deal. The first controversy came in early August, as a result of widespread press reports that, once the deal closed, Murdoch's longtime adviser and friend Michael Milken would become president of the Dodgers. Milken is, of course, a convicted securities felon. When I spoke with Bob Graziano, the Dodgers executive, he recalled the Milken rumors with a pained expression and said, "It was a jolt to fans and employees that we were selling, more of a jolt that it was Fox, and more of a jolt that Milken was going to be in here. So we asked Fox to put out a statement saying it was not true." Fox quickly complied, and stated also that Milken was not serving as an adviser on the transaction. A Fox executive, after reeling off for me a list of transactions that Milken had worked on recently for News—M.C.I., I.C.S. Communications, Premiere Radio—nonetheless insisted that Milken had *not* worked on this one. Why had he been excluded from this deal—here at home in Los Angeles, and involving a matter that, as a Dodgers fan, he would surely find compelling? "I think he's preoccupied with his health," the Fox executive ventured.

The fact is that in the couple of months prior to the press reports and Fox's denial Milken had been touring the world of baseball. Often accompanied by the former Dodgers' manager Tommy Lasorda, who is a friend of his, he travelled to staged events at many baseball stadiums across the country, and usually met with the teams' owners, in a campaign to raise money for CaP Cure, a prostate-cancer-fighting foundation that Milken runs. Whether or not Milken has at any point hoped to be the Dodgers president is not clear, but if the sale goes through it seems plain that he will be involved with the Dodgers in some respect. A close friend of Lasorda's told me that Milken was advising Murdoch on "what he should do with the team once he gets it—going all around, talking to people in baseball, getting advice." And a key person in the Dodgers transaction who knows Milken said, "Would he enjoy the mundane day-to-day? I don't think so. And that"—general management—"is not what he will be doing." But this person also said, "Is Mike going to help with the broad strategizing, the conceptualizing of owning the team? I don't doubt it."

A second controversy erupted on August 25th, when a front-page Los Angeles *Times* story, by Michael Hiltzik, described Murdoch's destructive foray into Australian rugby. The account quickly circulated among certain owners of baseball teams. The Houston Astros' owner, Drayton McLane, Jr., who sits on the ownership committee, was one of them. "It *is* of concern to the ownership committee," he told me. Fox executives were apoplectic, and were furious at Hiltzik, whom one called to berate.

THEN, in late September, news reports suggested that, if the sale went through, John Malone's Liberty Media would have the right to buy a half interest in the Dodgers. He was said to have obtained that right through the Fox/Liberty Sports joint venture. The News Corporation president, Peter Chernin, however, denied that ownership would be shared. He told the Los Angeles *Times*, "We are under no obligation to offer them ownership." Bud Selig said that after being called by a reporter, "I spoke to Peter"—O'Malley—"and Bob Graziano. They were as shocked as I was. Peter kept sending me little notes, faxes. But then they became satisfied that it was O.K."

If the story should prove to be true, it could affect the review process in two ways. The first is that it might well be taken as evidence that Murdoch could not be trusted in his dealings with baseball—something that was already a concern. And the second is that Malone—who has a reputation as a rough, strong-arming cable operator and has been characterized by Al Gore as the "Darth Vader of cable"—might well have even more difficulty being approved by baseball than Murdoch. Several years ago, Malone had approached a couple of baseball owners about buying their teams (one owner was Reinsdorf, whose Chicago White Sox and Bulls he was interested in), but he had been rebuffed.

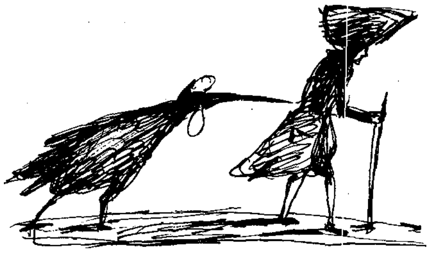
Two days after the Malone story broke, Fox issued a press release, which attempted to be definitive and yet leave the door open. "The FOX Group is under no obligation to offer a participatory role in the Dodgers to any other party," it said. Then a new paragraph began, "Nonetheless, the FOX Group, as is the right of any Major League Baseball franchise owner, may explore the possibility of inviting partners to participate in the Dodgers after the conclusion of the purchase."

Peter Barton, who negotiated the Fox/Liberty joint-venture agreement when he was the C.E.O. of Liberty, contradicted Fox's statement that Fox had no obligation to offer anyone a role in the Dodgers. He told me that Liberty "*would* have the right to fifty per cent of the Dodgers, because our agreement was that we would be fifty/fifty in sports everywhere in the U.S. . . . and if one wanted something and the other guy didn't have the heart for it, he could pass." Barton also said that he thought owning half of the Dodgers would be important for Malone. Otherwise, money for broadcasting rights (which could be set very high) could be channelled from the Fox/Liberty joint venture to the Fox-owned Dodgers; in other words, Malone's partners could siphon his money into their own separate holding. Peter Chernin has since said that while Liberty had had a right to participate in the purchase, they had effectively waived it by not coming into the deal in its early stages. Nevertheless, when I asked a Fox executive if Liberty still has the option, he confirmed that it does, and he echoed Barton's interpretation, saying, "The deal between Liberty and Fox is, we're supposed to be in the sports business together—either one has the option to go to fifty per cent."

The Fox people are sensitive to the fact that trust—or the lack of it—is a serious issue with Major League Baseball. The Fox executive suggested that it was not lack of disclosure on Fox's part but the archaism of baseball that had caused Fox and Liberty not to present themselves as joint acquirers. "We have no signed letter of intent" with the Dodgers, he said, "because baseball doesn't allow it. All we have is an agreement that if baseball approves we will do this. So at present there are no rights to share. . . . If baseball allowed a signed letter of intent, we would *both* be going through the process." He continued, "We *said* in the application that Fox/Liberty is a joint venture. It doesn't take a lot of brain surgery to figure it out. So, yes, they will be coming in."

When I asked Reinsdorf what it would mean to the ownership process if Malone did indeed have these rights, he replied, "Malone would have to be approved, too—and we haven't even started on him." Giving a mirthless chuckle, he added, "It would make for a good sitcom."

As of mid-November, the ownership committee was still grappling with the issues. Fox executives met with Bud Selig, to try to allay many owners' concerns. The most prevalent, and the one that is most serious in Selig's view, is that Murdoch will drive already skyrocketing payrolls even higher. Since Murdoch is buying the Dodgers as programming, and ratings respond to a winner, they reason, he will prefer to win with a ninety-million-dollar payroll than lose with a fifty-million-dollar payroll. (His well-known proclivity, after all, is overpaying.) Besides, what he does will inevitably affect other owners, because of salary arbitration and free agency. And ever-higher payrolls would render many small-market teams hopelessly noncompetitive.



Other issues, somewhat more arcane, arise from the degree to which Fox has enclosed Major League Baseball in its embrace during the last couple of years through its purchases of cable and broadcast television rights. Individual clubs own their local rights; national and international rights are controlled by the leagues, and when these rights are sold the revenues are divided equally among the teams. Within the last two years, Fox Sports has become a co-holder of baseball's national-broadcast television rights and—mainly through Fox/Liberty Sports deals—the holder of local-cable rights of a majority of the teams. Many teams depend heavily on those revenues, and if Fox owned the Dodgers it would be in a position to affect a rival team's competitiveness. Drayton McLane, the owner of the Astros—whose local-cable rights are owned by Fox Sports Southwest—said, "It is absolutely of concern, because it is your business partner who is paying you—and also owns the Dodgers."

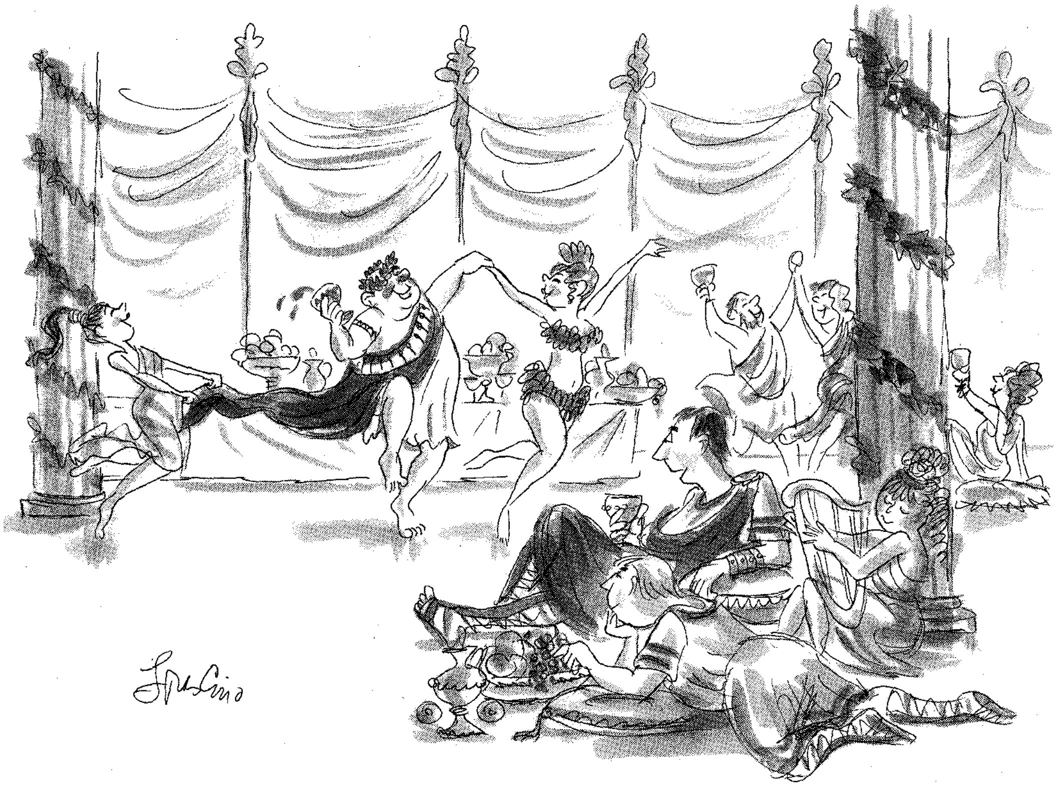
Ways can probably be found to deal with the distinct conflict-of-interest issues that result from Fox's multilayered relationship to Major League Baseball. What is harder to address is the general apprehensiveness that Murdoch inspires among many owners, leading to a litany of "What if?" scenarios. One owner said to me, anticipating that Murdoch would love to show Dodgers games in Japan, where baseball is enormously popular, and where his company is a partner in the new JSkyB satellite system, "What's to keep Murdoch from saying, 'I'm putting *my* team on *my* satellite system—why should I share the international revenues with you guys?' " Such fears do not seem unreasonable; indeed, Barton told me that another reason Malone would probably want half ownership of the Dodgers is that Fox Sports could become the team's international-rights holder. "For the Dodgers," Barton said, "this would be *huge*."

"The conflict for any broadcaster is the tension between a local club's desire to do what it wants to do and the national industry's desire to control that," Kheel told me. "You can just flick a switch if you're a broadcaster. It's so *easy*. The character issue comes in here. Is this someone whose word you trust? Is this someone who lives by the rules?"

THE owners' vote will probably occur in January, after the ownership committee finally makes its recommendation. The American League poses no threat to Murdoch, inasmuch as all that is required to win approval there is a majority. The National League, however, requires three-fourths in favor, and so five negative votes could kill the deal. Two National League owners who have been rumored to be potential opponents are Wayne Huizenga, of the Marlins, and the Tribune Company, which owns the Cubs. Other National League owners who have already gone on the record with their concerns are McLane; Larry Lucchino, of the San Diego Padres; Peter Magowan, of the San Francisco Giants; and, of course, the volatile Ted Turner, of the Atlanta Braves. Although Fox partisans claim that at the time of the Time Warner–Fox settlement Turner had indicated that he would not oppose the sale, one friend of Turner's told me that Turner had made no firm commitment and was still "plotting and scheming a way to block it." Whatever assurances may have been given, this person added, Turner is as unconstrained as ever, and "Time Warner will let him do what he wants."

A Fox executive agreed that considerable owner opposition existed, but he argued that the pressures to vote for the deal would be great, considering "what Fox has done for baseball." He pointed out that baseball owners—an individualistic lot, each with a strong personal agenda—are hardly known for standing firm as a group on an issue of principle. He suggested, moreover, that certain pressures could be selectively applied to any who were wavering. When I asked about the possibility of McLane's voting against the deal, for example, he alluded to the Astros' deal with Fox. "I don't think they have an alternative," he said. "We're the only regional sports network in town." Indeed, Fox is already ubiquitous in baseball—with its ownership of the national rights and its dominance of local rights—so the idea of taking a stand to block this deal may, in the end, seem just too quixotic. And there is also, of course, the factor of the owners' financial self-interest; a price as high as $311 million for the team and its real-estate holdings obviously raises the value of the other franchises as well.

In the event that baseball owners should prove unexpectedly truculent, this Fox executive continued, it would not mean that Fox was defeated. "What if Peter O'Malley decided he was going to sue?" he asked—that is, bring suit against Major League Baseball on antitrust grounds. If the antitrust exemption were rescinded, he continued, "you could start building a rival league—you raid players from the teams, and you have another league!"



"His debaucheries haven't lessened his effectiveness as emperor."

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BASEBALL is being pulled, ineluctably, into the future. It is impossible for anyone who witnessed the outcome of this World Series and its postscript not to recognize that. After the Series was won by the Florida Marlins—a team that Wayne Huizenga assembled out of nowhere, investing $89 million last winter in expensive free agents—Huizenga immediately put the team on the block, and has already begun unloading its most outstanding, and priciest, players to pay for his spending spree. Erect and dismantle: it is more like a controlled experiment—*can* you buy a championship?—than what baseball used to be.

What is called for, of course, is the near-impossible: for baseball to move into the future without losing the past, to adapt to change so imaginatively that its core mystery—whether it is business or the national pastime—is kept alive. That baseball has fallen so far short of accomplishing this during the past decade can be attributed, at least in part, to the absence of a strong commissioner, with full powers—someone with the capacity to visualize, chart, and navigate its course. Now that Murdoch has come into this disordered field, it is *he* who likely will be charting that course. And that means that the future—for the Dodgers, for the game, and certainly for the institution of Major League Baseball—will be more unpredictable than ever before. The rules will probably not apply; for Murdoch, they so often do not. And that century-old confusion at the heart of baseball will finally be resolved. ♦

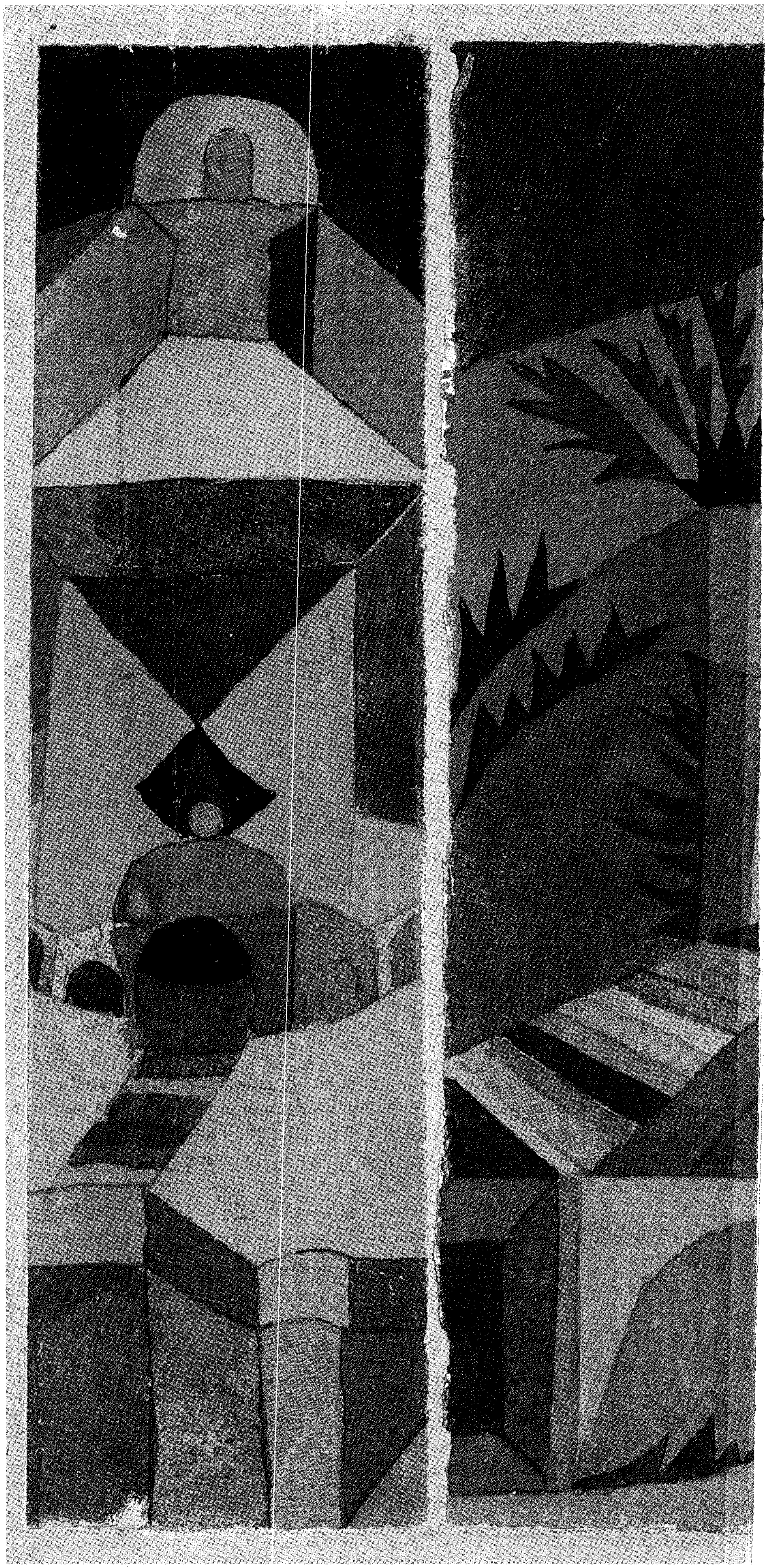
AT THE MUSEUMS

SUNBAKED KLEE

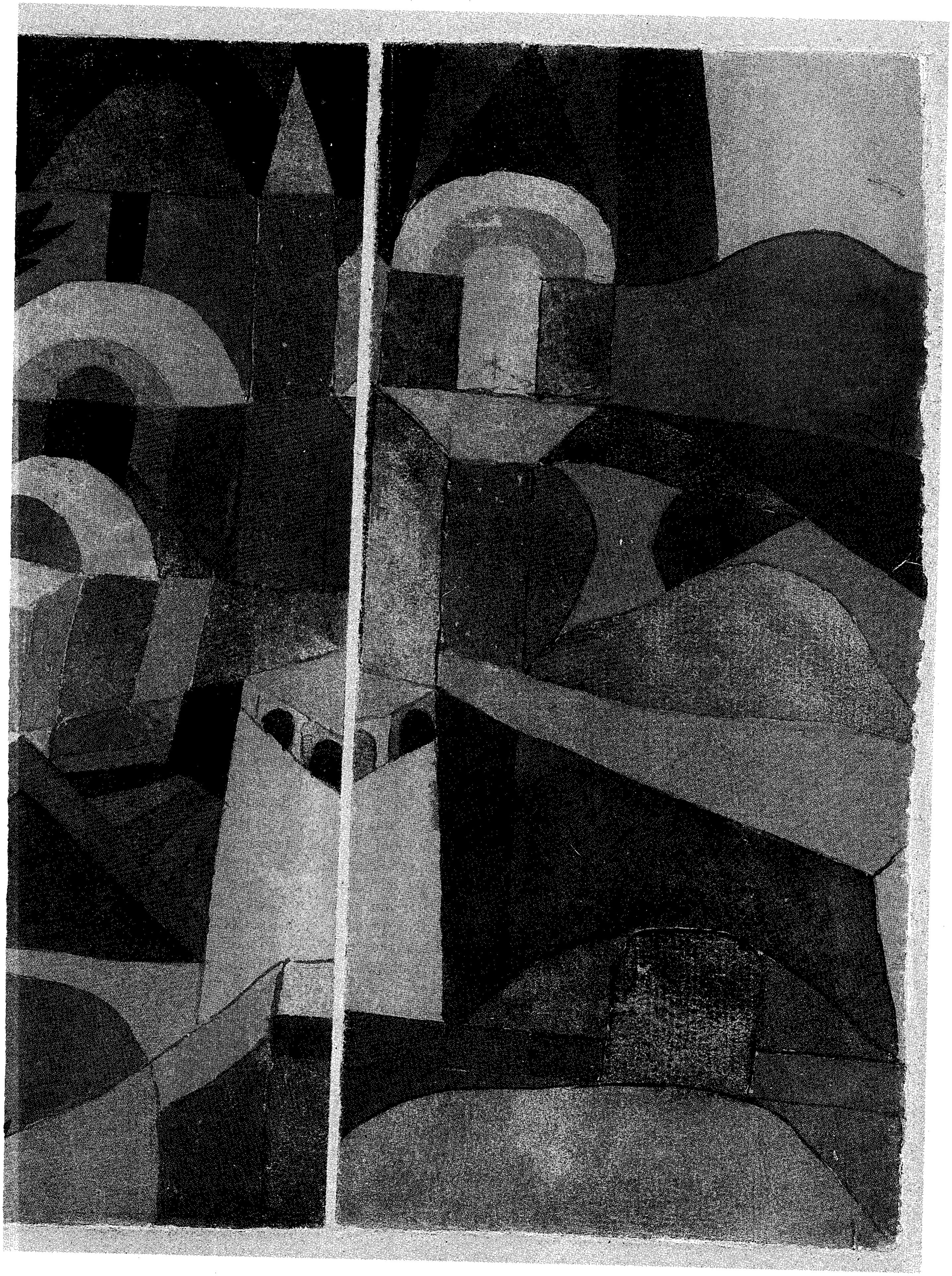
AS their steamer entered the harbor of Tunis on April 7, 1914, Paul Klee and his friend and fellow-artist August Macke were on deck to register their impressions. "On shore, very close, our first Arabs," Klee wrote in his diary. "The sun has a dark power. The colorful clarity on shore full of promise. Macke too feels it. We both know that we shall work well here."

Although they stayed for less than two weeks, the trip was a turning point in Klee's art. The intense, glowing, translucent color that we associate with his paintings appeared for the first time in his North African sketches and watercolors; years later, he was still using motifs and images he had stored in his visual memory from those light-struck days in Tunis, Hammamet, and Kairouan. The 1920 "Temple Gardens" (right), a recollection of Tunisia, is currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum, in a small show of Klee landscapes that the curator, Sabine Rewald, has selected from the ninety Klees donated to the museum, in 1984, by Heinz Berggruen, the Paris-based modern-art dealer. Klee, who sometimes used scissors in addition to paint and brushes, cut the picture into three vertical sections and rearranged them, with the center and left sections exchanging places. Fidelity to nature was never his aim. In this picture, he was after what he called a "synthesis of urban architecture and pictorial architecture," the synthesis being what his subtle, gently playful, infinitely resourceful intelligence did with what his eye took in. In school, Klee almost decided to become a musician rather than an artist—both his parents were musicians, and so was his wife. His work has been described as the chamber music of modern art, and the delicate counterpoint of line, composition, and color in "Temple Gardens" is about as Mozartean as painting gets.

Klee's diary entry for April 16, 1914, toward the end of his Tunisian trip, includes this famous passage: "Color possesses me. I don't have to pursue it. It will possess me always, I know it. That is the meaning of this happy hour: Color and I are one. I am a painter." —CALVIN TOMKINS



COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, THE BERGGRUEN KLEE COLLECTION, 1987



ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

THE FLAME

Salsa's biggest heartthrob breaks out in Paul Simon's new musical.

BY ALEC WILKINSON

SEPTEMBER arrives and Bigram Zayas realizes that his brother, Marc Anthony, the salsa heartthrob, whose career he oversees, is shortly to disappear from the view of his public. Can't promote "Contra la Corriente" ("Against the Current"), his third CD, with anything but videos because, what with rehearsals and previews, Anthony's been obligated through the summer to one of the leading roles in "The Capeman," Paul Simon's musical, which opens in January. Zayas broods, then decides that Anthony should toss his fans a farewell bouquet in the form of a concert called "Off to Broadway." Someone less bold might sign up Roseland, maybe the Beacon. Zayas gets the Big House—Madison Square Garden. Not the auxiliary hall called the Theatre. He rents the big room, the hockey rink—October 18th. Doesn't seem daunted by knowing that salsa singers have gone into the Garden only as members of revues, or that if he should fail to sell enough tickets he and his brother take serious haircuts.

Anthony is twenty-nine. Zayas is forty. Their mother, Guillermina, whom everyone calls Jenny, had two husbands; they were all raised in Puerto Rico and came to New York as children with their families. Anthony's given name is Marco Antonio Muñiz; he was named by his father—Felipe, a musician—for a Mexican singer. He became Marc Anthony to avoid being confused with the older man. Around Spanish Harlem, where he grew up, he is addressed as Tony. Anthony is about five feet eight, chalk thin, and as supple as an eel. He has a broad nose and a strong jaw, sharp cheekbones, coppery skin, and black hair. His appearance in photographs can make a person feel that a lineage bereft of Puerto Rican blood is inadequate. A way to observe his appeal is to rent "Big Night," Stanley Tucci's movie about two Italian brothers and their restaurant, which begins with a lingering, full-screen profile of Anthony as Cristiano, a waiter. His allure derives also from an offhand ability to project the presence of a susceptible temperament combined with a reserve of inner strength. In a botanica on East 105th Street a few weeks ago, I asked the man at the cash register if he was familiar with Marc Anthony. A man behind me said something in Spanish. The cashier nodded and said, "He says that he is like a flame that walks."

Anthony's fame is such that he cannot visit the parts of the city where Spanish is spoken without preparations and an escort. He is the first and only salsa singer to have an album go gold in America. His popularity extends through Europe, Japan, Central America, and the Caribbean but is perhaps greatest in Colombia, where he played last summer to sixty thousand people in a soccer stadium. However, he is probably regarded with the highest reverence in Puerto Rico. He has property on a hilltop there, and an architect has drawn up plans for a house. The architect, who works internationally, refused any money. To design a house for Marc Anthony, he said, was sufficient compensation.

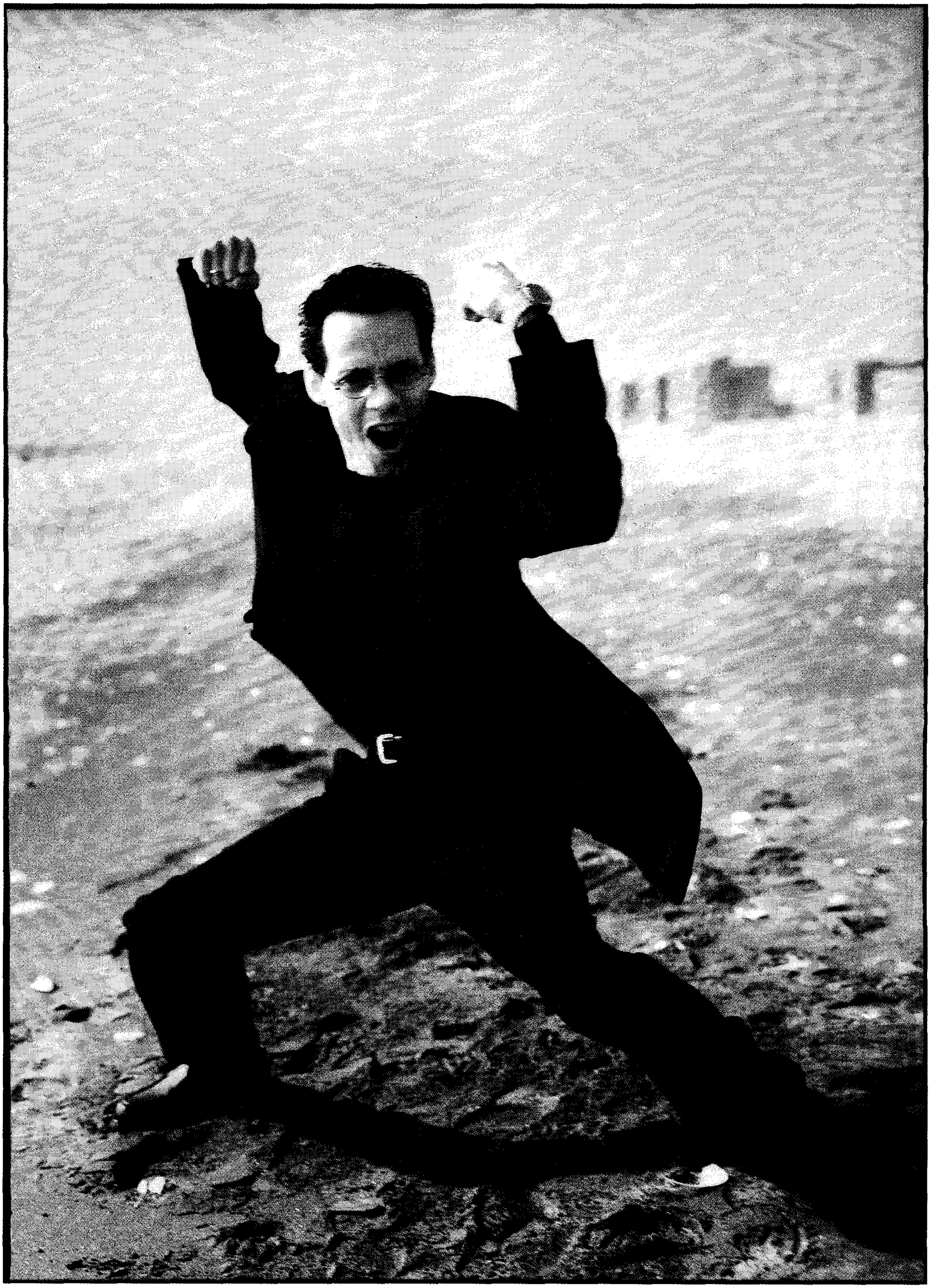
NEVERTHELESS, when Zayas raises the idea of the concert, Anthony's first thought is that he won't be able to fill the Garden. He begins to sleep poorly, his appetite wanes, and he walks around in a what-have-I-got-myself-into frame of mind. Four years ago, according to a photograph on a wall of his mother's apartment, in Spanish Harlem, he was a gaunt, slightly bug-eyed Latino with glasses, long hair, and a gold hoop in each earlobe. He had the sensitive and excitable look of a young matador who's slick with the cape and not so keen on the sword work. He sang in English in dance clubs. A respectable audience was a hundred people. He specialized in a tersely minimal music called house music, which features a singer's repeating a phrase, with slight variation, to the accompaniment of a rhythm track recorded on small cassettes called DATs.

He also performed a dance music invented by Latins called freestyle. Freestyle songs have two verses, a chorus, and a bridge, and are usually about some version of love. In addition, Anthony frequently sang in the background on other performers' records, often those of a band called the Latin Rascals, who worked with Little Louie Vega. In 1991, when Vega received a producer's contract from Atlantic Records, he asked Anthony to be his singer. None of their records were especially successful, but one, "Rebel," became a hit in the clubs. "It went tin," Anthony says, "maybe plywood."

In 1992, the Latin percussionist and bandleader Tito Puente asked Anthony and Vega to open a revue for him at Madison Square Garden. Appearing before such an enormous crowd made Anthony disinclined to go back to the clubs. He told Vega that he wanted to think about what he might do next, and they parted. His manager suggested that he sing in Spanish, but he wasn't interested. When Anthony was a small boy, his father would invite musicians to the family's apartment on Saturday nights, and they would show up with guitars and bongos and congas and maracas and play half the night in the kitchen. Anthony's father would put him on a table to sing. "I had two sets," Anthony says. "Six and eight." His repertoire consisted of a song called "El Zolsar," about a species of bird that lives in Puerto Rico. "He only had that one song," his father says. "But he could belt it." Growing up, Anthony listened mostly to rhythm and blues and to rock. Some months into his hiatus, though, he was driving in a car with Vega's sister and listening to a song by a singer named Juan Gabriel. "It was called 'Hasta Que Te Conocí,'" Anthony says, "which means 'Until I Met You,' and it ripped me apart. I don't know why, and I don't want to know why. I called my manager and asked if I could record this in salsa."

Salsa is a blend of strains of Cuban

Anthony at Far Rockaway Beach: He was born with the essential gift for Spanish singing—a "tear" in his voice. Photograph by Max Vadukul.



music with strains of jazz. It is extremely percussive. Its twitchy horn arrangements suggest night clubs and glamour and showy displays of money. Somewhere within it one feels an intimation of the rhythm of riding a horse, but it is essentially an urban music. Whereas Motown recorded its singers in the nineteen-sixties so that they would sound good on car radios, salsa is the music that sounds great in an airshaft. Like most male salsa singers, Anthony is a tenor. His voice is lush and a little smoky and deeply expressive. Paul Simon describes it as "a very clean instrument." Ednita Nazario, a highly regarded Puerto Rican singer who also has a leading role in "The Capeman," says that what makes Anthony different from other salsa singers is his ability to present emotion succinctly. "Spanish music is very passionate," she says. "It has a lot of feeling, and if you can convey that in your voice you are unique. We call it 'the tear.' He has a tear in his voice. Usually, I would imagine, it takes time to develop, but with Marc it's in his blood."

In the week leading up to the concert, Anthony spent his days learning his blocking and his nights in a studio on the West Side running down his repertoire with a seventeen-piece band. One evening a few days before the concert, Anthony's assistant, José Amoro, picked Anthony up at "The Capeman" rehearsal space, in the Village, and drove up Eighth Avenue toward the studio, where the band was waiting. His girlfriend, Claudette Encarnacion, a beautiful, light-haired Dominican, rode with him. Anxieties over whether the set would be sufficiently impressive had preyed on his mind through much of the night before. His features were drawn. He slumped. "I can't wait until Sunday," he said, "so that I can wake up and say, 'How did it go?' "

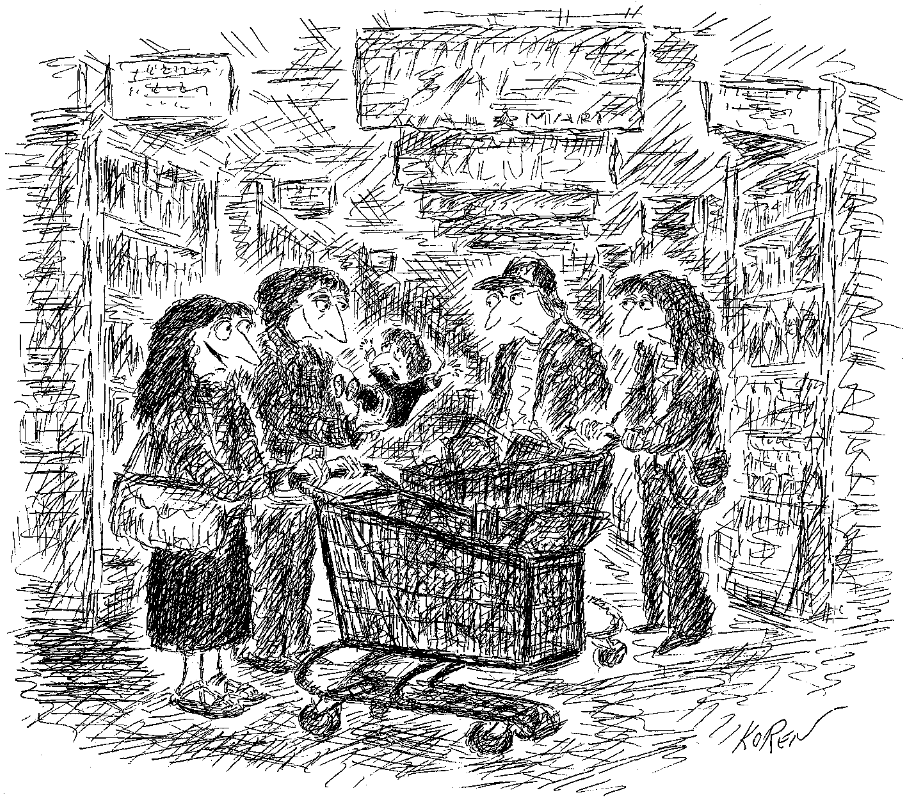
Amoro stopped the car at a light at Thirty-second Street. Anthony absently read the announcements on the electronic billboard outside the Garden—something about the Rangers, followed by something about the Knicks. When "Marc Anthony and friends, Sat. Oct. 18th" appeared, he sat up and said, "Oh, my God." In a few seconds, his name was replaced by a notice concerning the National Horse Show. The light changed, and the car moved forward. Anthony turned his head to follow the screen.

"It's not there anymore," Claudette said.

"I know, honey," he said gently.

ACCLAIM arrived so abruptly in Anthony's life that he describes its appearance by saying, "I saw my old life shattered." In 1993, he recorded in Spanish the song he had heard in the car. His manager then sent him to perform in Los Angeles at a Latin-music convention called Radio y Música. Anthony brought with him a DAT containing the song's instrumental tracks. He was living on so little money that the clothes he performed in were borrowed. In the audience were mainly disk jockeys. "I'm very nervous," Anthony recalls. "I'm trembling up a storm. There's one person clapping. There's no musicians behind me—it's just me and the DAT. I walk up to the mike and think, Make believe you're in your living room singing to your mom." When he finished, he left the stage so quickly that his manager had to grab him and point out that he was receiving a standing ovation. Several of the disk jockeys were dialling their phones. "Find this kid's CD," he heard one of them say. "I threw it out this morning—it's in the trash. Find it and play it."

Later that day, Anthony appeared on a television show called "Carnaval Internacional," which is broadcast all over the world. "That changed my life forever," he says. "I mean in one day. It seemed like years before I was ever in New York again. I was booked and booked and booked—Panama, Ecuador, Argentina, Colombia, Puerto Rico. Travel all night, arrive in Miami at eleven in the morning, do your sound check that afternoon, after the show everyone meeting in the lobby to take a bus to Orlando. I woke up once in the middle of the night in a hotel and didn't know where I was. I called my brother's room and said, 'Where are we?' He said, 'Look out the window.' All I could see was a city at night. Tokyo, I thought, How did this happen?" The best part of being celebrated was that musicians he admired—Ruben Blades and Placido Domingo among them—began calling with ideas for collaborations. When he heard Paul Simon's voice on his answering machine, he says, "I thought it was someone playing a joke on me. The message said, 'I've heard a lot about you, I would like to meet you.' I go to his apartment. This is three years ago. We listen to tapes of songs for 'The Capeman.' Some songs he only had ideas on, and he just picked up his guitar and played them. When it's time for me to leave, I say, 'Can I ask you something?' He says, 'O.K.,' and I say, 'Why am I here?' It was an awkward moment, I think, because he didn't want to offer me the part right out. He said, 'I wanted to get your opinion on it.' "



"She's a little traumatized—this is her first Wal-Mart."

IN "The Capeman," Anthony plays Salvador Agron, a fifteen-year-old Puerto Rican who in 1959 killed two teen-age boys in a park in New York. The murders were the consequence of a misunderstanding that evolved from a gang dispute. What a witness who saw the killer remembered about him was that he had worn a cape. The newspapers referred to him as the Cape Man. It took the police three days to find him, and when they did he was extravagantly unrepentant. The headline above his photograph on the front page of the *News* said " 'DON'T CARE IF I BURN,' SNEERS SLAYER OF TWO." Agron was sentenced to the electric chair. He began writing prose and poetry and eventually had a conversion. He stayed in prison for twenty years, was pardoned by Governor Nelson Rockefeller, was released in 1979, and died in 1986, from what was probably a heart attack.

One evening, after a rehearsal involving the first blocking out of the murders, Anthony had Amoro drive him to the park, in the West Forties, where the killings occurred. A playground occupies the site. Anthony walked to the center of it and stood with his hands in his pockets—a slight, sombre figure the color of a shadow in the falling darkness. I had heard him tell another actor that it bothered him to perform the movements that had cost the two boys their lives, but the emotional complications of portraying a killer were not something he cared to discuss. All he would say when I asked about them was "I have to turn from them and become Sal."

Anthony is the first actor Simon cast. I asked Simon how he'd learned about him. We were walking down a stairway outside the rehearsal studio. Simon paused and stuck his right foot forward, I assumed to examine his shoelace. "It's tied," I said. "It *feels* like it's untied," he said. Then he said that several years ago he had gone to a record store and asked for the CDs of the best young salsa singers. "They gave me two or three guys," he said, "and I listened to his and thought, This is good. In fact, really good. In fact, he was clearly the best. Also, Marc looked a little like Sal—they have the same angular features. And he's from New York—he didn't know about the Cape Man, but his father's generation did. We met and talked, and I played him some stuff. Then, after a while, I asked, 'Do you think you would be interested?' "

Anthony's regard for Simon is apparent in the way Simon's name figures in his conversation. I once heard him discussing with Zayas a decision he was having difficulty making. He said, "Paul says that when you worry about something you usually already have the answer, you just don't like it."

Simon generally wears the deadpan expression of a sybarite who can be stirred by only the most recondite pleasures. His manner in rehearsal is businesslike and quietly insistent. One of the members of the cast described it to me as "This is what I want, give it to me." In the course of the rehearsals I attended, I saw Simon smile twice—once when Anthony arrived and walked over and embraced him, and once when I told him that I had seen him smile when Anthony arrived and walked over and embraced him.

THE day before Anthony's concert, a full-page ad for it appeared in *El Diario*, the newspaper of New York's Hispanic community. Across a picture of Anthony was a banner saying "Sold Out." Onstage the next night, Anthony wore a black suit over a white shirt. His singing was fervid and complex in its references—there were threads in his phrasing of blues and doo-wop and gospel music—and he danced with an exuberance that was close to abandon. I watched the concert from the back of the stage. In the stands behind me, a group of girls screamed for so long that Anthony eventually came over to see who could be making such a noise, which made one of them begin weeping. Anthony sang with his father a song called "Last Kiss"—about lovers forced to separate—which his father had written. His mother sat in the second row, near the center of the stage, and at one point he leaned forward and kissed her. Claudette stood by the front of the stage in a fitted, green silk suit. Beside her an entire section of the audience was filled with the cast of "The Capeman," who stood and danced and sang along and cheered as passionately as if they were citizens of a newly formed nation hearing their anthem. Ruben Blades, Ednita Nazario, and Paul Simon sang a song from "The Capeman," in English, called "I Was Born in Puerto Rico." Anthony told me that Simon arrived onstage saying, "Oh, good. Good for you. You must be so happy."

Afterward, Anthony sat on a black sofa in his dressing room for perhaps half an hour with his father, Claudette, and Zayas. He said very little. He embraced several friends. Someone handed him a glass of champagne, and he exchanged it for a bottle of Puerto Rican beer. He seemed both exhilarated and drained. A little after midnight, he went to a party in his honor at a night club in midtown and stayed until five-thirty. Then he and Claudette went to a small hotel on the East Side and had a room-service breakfast. Afterward, they and Amoro went to his mother's apartment. They talked through the rest of the morning, and sometime early in the afternoon they sat at a small table by a window in the kitchen and had bowls of Seven African Powers soup, which his mother had made from seven kinds of seafood she'd brought from Puerto Rico, where she has a house. She thinks that the seafood she gets in New York is not fresh enough. She is a small, compact, resolute, and cheerful woman, with a round face, large brown eyes, and short hair dyed blond.

Her apartment, which Anthony lived in for three years—until he was seventeen—is on the ninth floor. From a window in one of the bedrooms you can see the windows on the thirty-sixth floor of the building where Anthony lives on the Upper East Side. His mother is a devout Catholic and often worships at home. On a table by the front door she has a small altar, with some carved religious figures that friends have given her with candles that burn for days at a time.

I asked if she remembered Anthony's singing on the kitchen table, and she said, "Oh, sure. 'El Zolsar.' " She told me then that she had taken Anthony as a small boy to a social club where his father was playing. "He was six or seven years old," she said. "He sang 'El Zolsar,' and a man there liked him so much that he gave me a dollar—a silver certificate. I saved it all these years." She went to another room and came back with the dollar bill. The ink had turned to a color nearly like that of a sepia photograph, and there was tape in two places where the bill was torn. She gave it to Claudette.

"My first dollar as a singer," Anthony said.

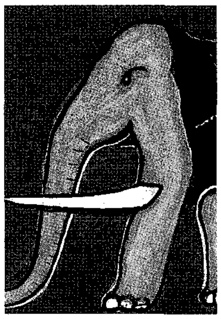
His mother said that the man had been standing beside her. Noting how loud she was clapping, he asked if she knew the child. She said that she was his mother. "He told me, 'God bless the boy. I tell you, he's going to be something someday.' " ♦

FICTION

A HEART IS SUCH A HEAVY THING

The romance of newlyweds.

BY AKHIL SHARMA



RUN KARAN had just turned twenty-four when he decided that he would marry the chubby round-faced girl he had never met. Four months ago, he had got his first job, as a bookkeeper for Toyota Tonics. With his new employment, and its endless supply of tonic, he had taken to drinking many bottles of the sugary stuff every day. Arun, finally a man, a man with a job, decided that it was time he gained some weight. And, finally a man, a man with a job, Arun agreed to his father's pleas to consider marriage. And so, late one evening, the word went around that Arun was looking for a wife, and in no time he and his family were playing host to a procession of fathers, almost all of them strangers, who appeared, one after another, bearing black-and-white photographs of their daughters in various poses and with varying degrees of ugliness. This went on for three months. And then one day Vinod Mishra, the father of Vibha, appeared. Vibha, Arun could see, was not ugly, just fat—and she had, as well, a sizable dowry, and Arun threw up his hands and said, "Why not? I get along with everyone. So why not her?"

Arun Karan was still twenty-four, but he was now a twenty-four-year-old with a job and a fiancée. (The wedding would be next month.) And, finally, he was starting to gain some weight. What he now needed was a better job—that was just the thing before he got married—and his father, Ram Karan, had just the solution: he would make his son a teacher.

I

Ram Karan wanted his son to meet Mr. Gupta, Ram Karan's supervisor and the head of the physical-education department at the Delhi municipality where they both worked. Mr. Gupta was a man of influence, and had promised that he might be able to do something for Ram Karan's son. There was to be a wedding reception at Mr. Gupta's home for his son, Narayan.

Strings of small blue and red light bulbs hung three stories down the front of the Gupta house. Mr. Gupta stood at the gates of the courtyard greeting guests. Behind him waiters in red turbans, white jackets, and white pants moved among the visitors. Electric fans, five feet tall, stood every few steps along the courtyard's walls. Arun and his father were there to offer their congratulations.

"You want to be a teacher, Arun?" Mr. Gupta asked.

The answer was so obvious that Arun wondered whether he was being teased. Mr. Gupta had already made his promise. The only reason Ram Karan had brought Arun to the party was to make Mr. Gupta feel obligated to keep his word.

"Yes," Arun said.

"Mr. Gupta can help," Ram Karan said.

"I can try," Mr. Gupta said modestly.

"If you knew all the people Mr. Gupta knew, you would go mad," Ram Karan said.

Arun's father could flatter people so extravagantly that he stopped making sense.

"Your father compliments me five times a day, like a Muslim saying his prayers," Mr. Gupta said.

"Most Muslims are far from Mecca, while I sit just down the hall from you," Ram Karan replied.

Mr. Gupta laughed. "See how far shamelessness will take you."

A couple arrived behind them. The man wore a kurta pajama, and the woman had on a dress. A cosmopolitan mixture, Arun thought.

Ram Karan raised his voice to make sure they heard: "All Mr. Gupta has to do is look at someone and the person gets a job, a wife, a government flat." He nodded at his own words.

"Go in, Mr. Karan," Mr. Gupta said, gesturing.

Ram Karan took a folded envelope with a hundred and one rupees inside and gave it to Mr. Gupta. "For your son's new life," he said, and shook Mr. Gupta's hand one more time.

As they stepped into the courtyard, Ram Karan, who was fat and bald except for a ridge of hair on either side of his scalp, slipped an arm around Arun's waist. "That is how you speak to powerful people, Fatso," he said. "They know you're exaggerating, but they like it, and you keep your pride because you also know you're exaggerating."

The rich, his father was always saying, may be better or smarter, but there are still ways to make them do what you want.

Near the courtyard they met Mrs. Chauduri, the municipality's senior junior physical-education officer. She was short—very, very short—but, in fact, just tall enough, technically, not to be a dwarf.

"Auntiji, how is your health?" Arun asked.

"It is as God wills," Mrs. Chauduri sighed. Two years earlier, she had undergone a double mastectomy.

"God is testing you," Arun said. The phrase pleased him, and he could see that Mrs. Chauduri was flattered by it.

"And you will pass," his father added.

A waiter edged by, and Ram Karan exclaimed, "Tonight, I will drink only whiskey."

Other physical-education officers began gathering around them. They, like Arun and his father, wore only shirts and pants. Nearly all the other men in the courtyard, Arun noticed, were wearing suits.

At some point, Ram Karan decided to declare the closeness of his relationship

FILIP PAGOWSKI

with Mr. Gupta by getting drunk. "We should get crazy," he said. "It will be a way of letting Mr. Gupta know how happy we are." Ram Karan promptly poured an entire glass of whiskey down his throat.

Arun and Mrs. Chauduri exchanged glances.

"You are a good boy," Mrs. Chauduri whispered to Arun. "I am going to tell Mr. Gupta that you are a good boy." Mrs. Chauduri then slipped into the crowd and disappeared.

Of the three rooms abutting the courtyard, only the central one had its doors open. The food was in there, and the room was so packed that plates were being passed back out over people's heads. They were shouting and laughing in the struggle. A woman holding a boy's hand stood near the doorway saying, "Let us through." No one did. Arun stood a few feet from the woman. He was finding the undisguised greed unsettling.

A waiter passed, and Arun ordered a drink. "Can you fill the whole glass?" he asked. He had drunk perhaps five times in his life, and hated alcohol, but because it was free he felt obliged to consume as much as possible.

"All you have to do is ask, sir," the waiter said, and Arun immediately knew the man would want a tip.

Nearby, he saw a fat woman wearing a sleeveless maroon blouse and gold bangles on both arms. She was eating from a plate piled high with cubes of cheese. Since this was the hottest time of the year, when the cows produced very little milk, the production and sale of cheese was illegal. It occurred to Arun that this cheese must have been scattered carefully throughout the trays of food hidden in the press of bodies, and the fat woman must have gathered it with care. The way she was hoarding this delicacy made Arun think of his father flattering Mr. Gupta for favors: they were both petty, desperate acts of greed. Such desperation was everywhere. The fat woman noticed his stare and turned her face to the wall.

The whiskey came, a full glass. The waiter stood beside him for a minute and in a low voice repeated, "Reward, sir, reward." Arun avoided his eyes.

The first sip of the bitter stuff made him gag. He continued drinking, though, standing in a corner near a fan, with the whiskey hidden between his hands.

"Happy?" Ram Karan boomed from somewhere in the courtyard. He often greeted people this way when he was cheerfully drunk. Arun could not see him. "Happy?" came the voice again.

There was a stir in the crowd, and Arun spotted his father standing close to an extremely thin man. Alcohol had turned his father's face red, making him look angry. As a child, Arun used to be so afraid when his father came home drunk that the only way he could sleep was wedged against a wall under his cot. He felt that fear now, but instead of paralyzing him it made him angry, even eager to fight. Arun was pleased by the anger.

The man said something, and Ram Karan shouted, "How happy?" The man responded, and Ram Karan, lifting his arms as if he were about to dance, began singing the words "Listen, love, listen."

Ram Karan was a good singer, and even when he was drunk his voice had personality, a patient whimsy. The crowd shifted again. Seeing his father's talent diminished Arun's anger.

A second room edging the courtyard was opened, and inside, framed by the doorway and sitting on red thrones, were the groom and the bride. Narayan wore a blue suit, and the woman wore a red sari, a fold of which was pulled up to cover her face.

As Arun moved to join a queue that was forming to offer the couple congratulations, he felt a hand on his arm. It was Mr. Gupta.

"Your father wants you," he said, and pinched Arun's sleeve to direct him through the crowd. From the tightness of Mr. Gupta's face, Arun knew what had happened: his father was already unmanageably drunk.

He found his father outside, on the side of the road, standing close to a short dark-skinned businessman named Mr. Maurya. When Arun was a child and Mr. Maurya was struggling in his business, he used to visit their flat with rum and whiskey and spend the night on the roof wheedling Ram Karan for favors. Now Mr. Maurya was trying to get into his white Ambassador sedan.

"You weren't too busy to come see me when your only business was recycling the paper from schools!" Ram Karan was saying, so loudly that Arun could hear him from the courtyard gates. Arun crossed the road.

His father persisted. "You should let me do things for you."

"If I have work, I'll call you," Mr. Maurya said, looking Ram Karan in the eye. Arun stopped about ten feet from his father. Fright kept him from going any closer.

Mr. Maurya opened his car door and got in, but Ram Karan suddenly lurched forward, wedging himself in front of the door before Mr. Maurya could shut it. Ignoring him, Mr. Maurya slipped the key into the ignition and started the car. Ram Karan climbed into the sedan, shoving the smaller man aside. The engine whirred. For a long moment, Mr. Maurya and Ram Karan sat crushed together in the driver's seat. Then, suddenly, Ram Karan got out again. Mr. Maurya quickly repositioned himself behind the steering wheel and shut the car door. Ram Karan stood breathing heavily and looking at the ground. Arun was frozen in embarrassment, with the alcohol in him vanishing in a flare of fear. He stood there immobile, beside his father, as the sedan rolled away.

II

The 100 bus back to the Old Vegetable Market, where the Karan family lived, was nearly empty. Ram Karan and his son sat in the back. They had not spoken during the wait at the stand and were silent now. Arun was thinking of his forthcoming wedding, how disappointing it would be for someone to be married to a man as confused and ridiculous as himself.

"Mr. Maurya has seen me drunk before," Ram Karan said at last. "He used to bring me bottles of Old Monk Rum."

They passed the fenced fields of the police academy. The fields were empty and wide.

"What does Mr. Maurya care? I do anything he wants." A little later he began gasping as he prepared for tears. Arun's father usually cried after getting drunk.

Ram Karan put his hand on his son's thigh. The bus swung around a corner. The conductor, a young man, was watching them in the rearview mirror. Ram Karan continued now in a full flow of tears, "If Mrs. Chauduri would just retire, I would then become senior junior officer. She comes to the office only once a week."

Arun stared out the window. He was

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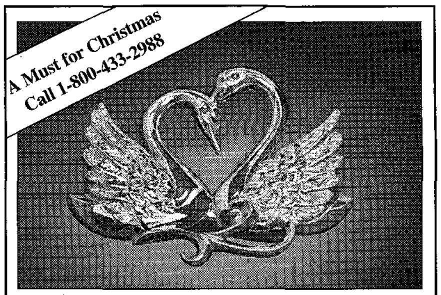

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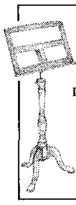

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FOR THINKING DRINKING.

unhappy. He sat still under his father's hand. Where had his anger gone—the anger he'd felt when he heard his father shouting "Happy"?

Ram Karan gave several long, shaking sighs, as if in satisfaction. Then he said, "I wonder what Mrs. Chauduri's husband thinks of her not having breasts."

By the time they had crossed Malka Ganj and Arun could see the Old Clock Tower, his father's sighs had almost ended. As they slowed for their stop, Ram Karan wiped his cheeks with both hands. "If I didn't drink," he said, "everything would be different for me." Ram Karan yawned and unbuttoned one of his cuffs. Then he started on the other one, as if he were already home and undressing.

III

Arun was to be married in three days. This was the last time he would be allowed out of the flat until the wedding. (The wedding deposits were nonrefundable; he had to be kept from the evil eye.)

"As a wedding present, I'm going to hang myself from the fan above your bed," said Ajay. Ajay was Arun's twelve-year-old brother. "You'll come into your room, turn on the light and the fan at the same time, and my body will start twisting."

"You don't weigh enough to choke by hanging," Arun said.

"I'll tie bricks to my feet."

"If you want to stop the wedding, remember to kill yourself before, not after we are married."

It was night, and they were walking home through the Old Vegetable Market. The paths between the stalls were narrowing as their owners, in preparation for shutting down, threw rubbish out for the cows to eat. Only a few of the stalls still had their kerosene lamps lit, and at these the owners were stacking the plates of their scales. The air smelled of coriander and wet green things.

"Why don't you run away?" Ajay said. "I can give you twenty-three rupees." He had meant this to be a joke, but as this was all the money he had, the words came out with too much gravity.

"Shoelaces cost ten," Arun said.

They stopped and bought several bananas, each just a little longer than an index finger. Arun, distracted by his thoughts, was talking less and less these days. The brothers had only two more nights of sleeping on side-by-side cots on the open roof. All the nights after that, Arun and his new wife would be hidden from view in the roof's only room, a small yellow one.

"I have to get strong for Vibha," Arun said, shoving a whole banana into his mouth.

Ajay put two bananas into his mouth and, pretending they were tusks, began to swing his head.

They continued walking. Ajay said, "She probably stinks because she's fat." Vibha was actually plump, not fat, but because Arun and Ajay had seen her only once, two weeks before, when the entire family visited her house and she served them tea without speaking, they had begun to describe her as obese.

"Maybe I should stop bathing, too," Arun said.

"How will the rest of us live?" Ajay said, imagining the smell. But he was touched by his brother's undoing of the insult.

They left the stalls and proceeded along the high sidewalk that ran till Old Clock Tower Road met Malka Ganj Road at the police station. A few cots had been set out on the pavement, and there were men sitting on them and playing cards by candlelight.

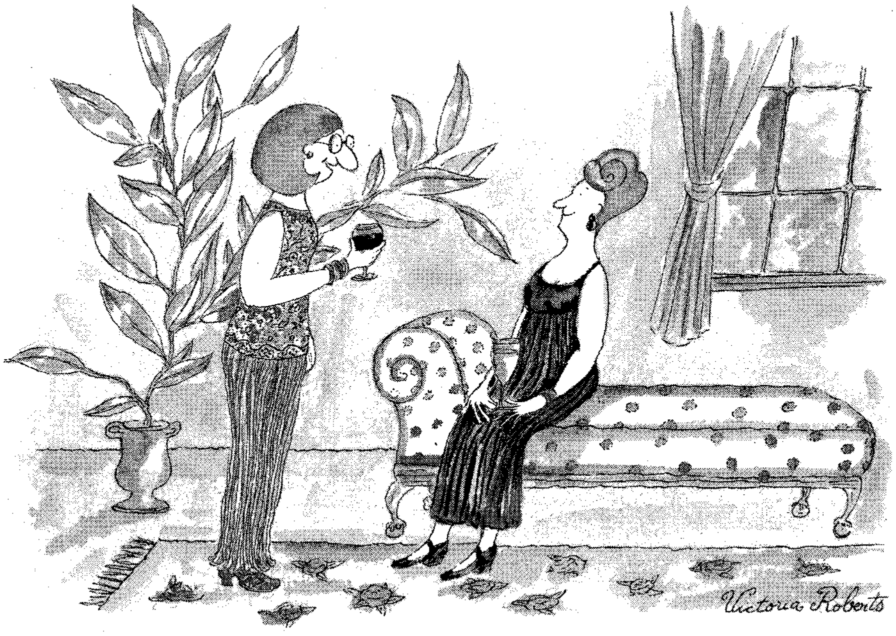
"Reasonable people cannot behave badly toward each other when both know that a marriage is for life," Arun said.

They had reached the alleyway that led to their doorway. Ajay wanted to say something, but he did not know what. "Let's go drink some milk."

"I want to get home," Arun said. He paused, noticing how his silence was affecting Ajay, and added, "I'm not unhappy—I'm frightened." He pinched the back of his brother's neck. "Let's go sleep."

IV

The ceremony went on all night in a tent in a field near Vibha's house. When the prayers had been said, Arun's mother, Ratha, hurried the bride along so that Arun's relatives could go home and rest. There were about thirty in all, and by seven a chartered bus had unloaded them in the Old Vegetable Market. By



"I spent my thirties doing my twenties, but by the time I was in my forties I was doing my forties."

• •

eight they were all squeezed into the Karans' small flat, most of them (including three snoring children beneath the dining table) on the floor. Relatives were everywhere, all now deep in slumber. It was dark, and the only two people stirring were Vibha and her new mother-in-law.

Vibha was sitting on a corner of a thin mattress in the entry hall. The rest of it had been taken up by members of two heavily breathing families. Vibha was expected to stay up in case friends and well-wishers came around to call on her. Her mother-in-law was squatting underneath a counter, looking into the flour tin. Ratha, all sinews and deeply wrinkled loose skin, was anxious about the amount of food she was going to have to cook for the relatives. The kitchen was so narrow that only one person could move between the counters.

"Where is the shampoo, please?" Vibha asked, suddenly. She stood in the kitchen doorway with her sari pulled up to veil her face. She was plump enough that her stomach hung over the waist of her sari.

"We don't have shampoo," Ratha said. Vibha didn't move.

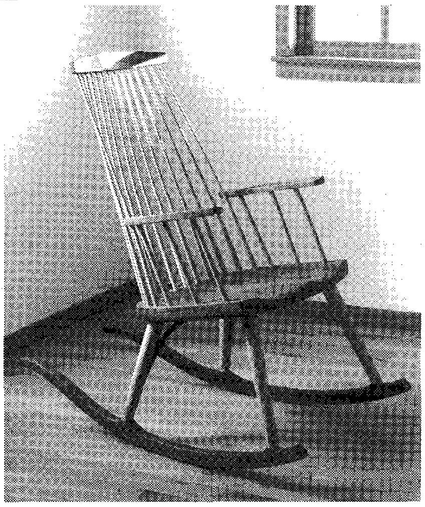
"Could someone get shampoo?" Vibha asked.

"Use soap," Ratha said, abruptly, and more loudly than she had intended.

Vibha left.

After marrying Ram Karan, Ratha had moved into his family's home, where, disliking her without cause, his sisters had hidden the soap. She had remained silent on the matter, not wishing to appear a complainer. Now, in a similar situation, Vibha's question appeared so bold that Ratha wondered whether something was wrong with the girl's mind. There had already been difficulties in getting the promised dowry. To be completely deceived into accepting a daughter-in-law who was crazy did not, under the circumstances, appear impossible. In fact, Ratha knew of several marriages in which madness (and worse) was discovered after everything had been done, and the only solution had been divorce. A nephew of hers was still with a woman who was periodically possessed by ghosts. And the son of an acquaintance had married a heroin addict, whose habit was discovered only when syringes started clogging the toilet. A cousin had married a man who always wore socks, even when he was in the bath. Later, her cousin tugged off his socks while he was asleep and found leprous purple stumps.

Forty minutes later, Vibha returned.



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"Can I do some yoga?" she asked. "Otherwise I might fall asleep."

Vibha's eccentricity was starting to make Ratha genuinely afraid.

"Where?"

"On the roof, maybe?"

On the roof! She imagined her heavy daughter-in-law sitting up there before the world, trying to drag a leg behind her neck. She was now certain that Vibha was mad.

"Go back and sit," Ratha hissed.

Ratha washed her hands and then went to wake her husband. Ram Karan, who had started out sleeping on the floor parallel to the cot where he had put his father, had somehow become twisted underneath it so that now only his calves showed.

Ratha nudged her husband awake.

"Come outside," she whispered.

They went onto the balcony, which looked down over a squatter colony made up of mud huts. It was so hot they were both sweating.

"This girl," Ratha said, but her voice came out so shrill that she stopped. She climbed a short flight of steps to the roof. Her husband followed.

Arun was sleeping in the roof's small yellow room. "This girl is crazy," Ratha said in a quieter voice. She told him about the shampoo and the yoga, glancing at Arun's room as she spoke.

"That's not so bad," Ram Karan said. "You're that crazy yourself."

"Going to the open roof to do yoga? The day after your wedding?"

Ram Karan lifted a shoulder in a tired shrug. "You haven't slept," he said.

"I was seventeen when I married you, and I had better manners. Vibha is twenty-three."

"Her mother is crazy, too," said Ram Karan.

They heard steps coming up the stairs. It was Ajay. The latrine was near the balcony.

"Has there been a murder?" he asked.

"Your mother thinks Vibha is crazy."

Ajay smiled at the possibility of scandal. "Why?"

Ratha explained.

"That is strange," he said, and a moment later added, "My question is, where is the dowry?"

Vibha's family had provided the dowry in the form of furniture. They had done this without consulting anyone. But there was no space in the flat, and the furniture had been returned and a promise of cash extracted. Arun's family had expected the money at the wedding, but only four hundred rupees had turned up.

"They give us a washer and we have water two hours a day?" Ratha said. Arun's family had been persuaded to keep a large washing machine. It had been put in the yellow room on the roof. "Would sane people do that?"

"Oh, God," Ram Karan sighed. The possibility of no dowry suddenly seemed real.

"Return the girl," Ratha said. She was feeling cheated.

"We could have got a motorcycle, a Honda, for Arun," Ajay said, needling his father. "But if you return her now, her parents will go to the police saying that we demanded money."

"How could I know they would be so cunning?" Ram Karan said in a heavy voice.

Ajay went to the room on the roof and knocked.

"Hello," Arun called from inside.

He was smiling when he opened the door, and Ratha wondered if he had been awake, listening to them. The ceiling fan was spinning, and the floor was wet from the water that Arun had poured out to evaporate and dull the heat. Arun went back to the bed and lay down. He was wearing only shorts, and his stomach spread out on either side of him. Everyone stepped inside and sat along the edge of the bed.

Ratha told the yoga story once more. Telling it so often was beginning to take away its power for her.

"Couldn't she be crazy?" she asked.

"She's not like us," Arun said softly and seriously. Ratha was surprised by the thoughtfulness in his voice.

"Who gives a washing machine to someone in the Old Vegetable Market?" Ram Karan asked. The washer was in a corner, covered with a yellow sheet.

"What about the dowry?" Ajay asked.

"That money is gone," Arun said, and chuckled.

"What are you showing your teeth for?" Ratha said.

"It's a good day. I've got married. That's why I'm laughing," Arun said.

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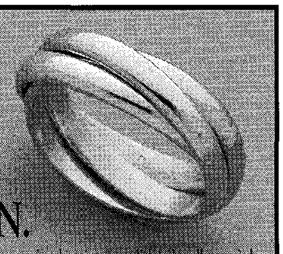

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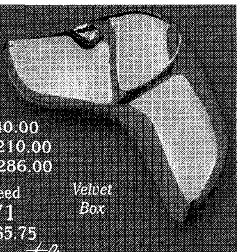

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He grabbed his stomach and shook it.

"The boy's gone crazy for the girl," Ram Karan said, disgusted.

"See, 'crazy,' " Arun said, still holding his stomach.

"Quiet," Ratha said. "All Delhi is sleeping downstairs."

Ajay lay down beside his brother and fell asleep almost immediately. Then Ram Karan crawled over them and put a pillow beneath his own head. Ratha could see her worries being dissipated. She still felt as if some wrong had been done to her, but it had been done while she was distracted, so she did not know whom to blame.

"You can't sleep because of the pain that big smile causes?" Ratha asked.

Arun giggled. He did not close his eyes, and Ratha did not move. She had begun to feel tired.

There was a knock. It was Vibha. Arun covered his bare chest with a pillow. Vibha was holding a tray with five cups of tea and a saucer of sugar on it. She kept a fold of her sari over her face by clenching it between her teeth.

Vibha eyed the room. "What's under the sheet?" she asked.

"A washing machine," Ajay answered, staring at her.

"Why?"

"Your father gave it," Ram Karan said.

"You don't use it?"

"Two buckets of water a day would be more useful."

When Vibha realized the problem, she began laughing, and the fold of sari that had been covering her face slid onto her shoulders. "You can store clothes in it," she said. Arun began laughing, too. Vibha smiled at him, and Ratha thought for the first time that what she had first seen as a sign of insanity might just be directness.

It made her think of her own marriage, how bravely and willfully she had entered it. She hadn't asked questions of anyone; she had wanted only to do what was expected of her—that, she believed, would win her happiness. A sadness rushed upon Ratha, and she spilled her tea.

"There's more in the pot downstairs," Vibha said.

Vibha held the tea tray by her side, between thumb and forefinger, as she stood before them, drinking from her

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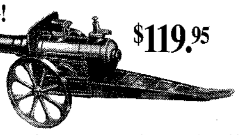

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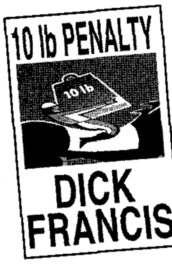

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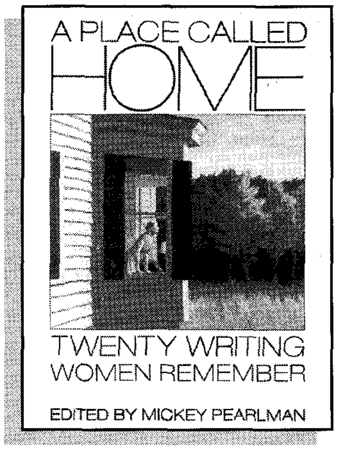

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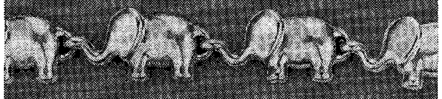

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VILLE ET VILLAGE

cup. For Ratha this casualness looked suddenly gallant.

"Sit, Vibha, if you want," she said.

V

The raindrops fell so fast on the bus roof that the clicking was like hail. It was the first rain. Ram Karan awakened and pulled himself up straight in his seat. The monsoon had been delayed again and again, until even August had appeared likely to pass without relief. He pushed open the bus window a little. Because there were no trees in the Old Vegetable Market, Ram Karan wondered whether the sweetness he smelled might be coming from the concrete of the buildings along the road. Within minutes, summer was gone. The plastic of the seat did not burn. It was possible to look into the sky without squinting.

As the bus moved slowly through traffic, clumps of naked boys began to appear on the sidewalk. Women with loose hair came out, and could be seen standing around, talking. And old men who believed in the healing powers of the first rain began climbing onto the roofs one by one. They were dark against a dark sky.

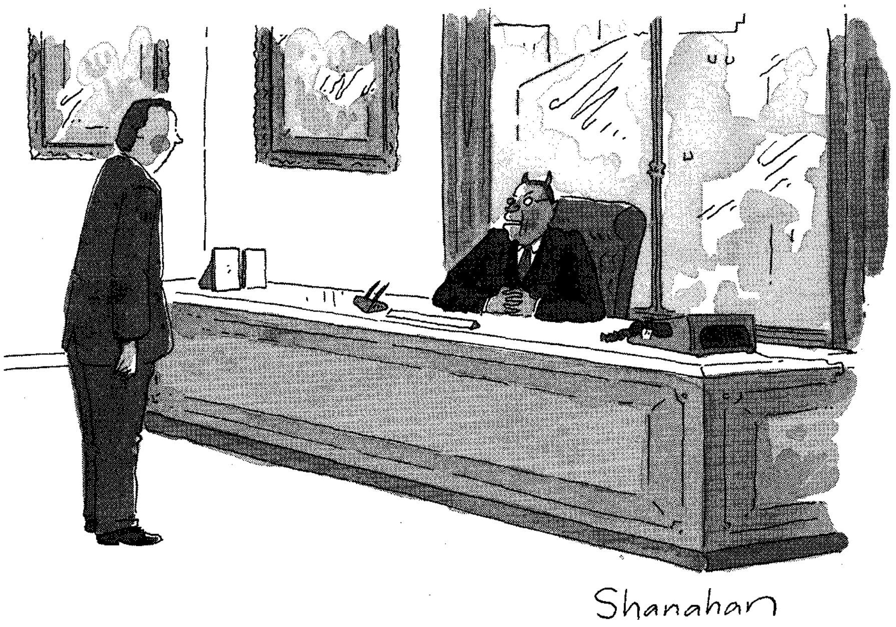
At the bus stand, the passengers got off slowly in newfound ease. The puddles on the road looked as if they were simmering. Ram Karan decided that he would buy samosas on his way home, and his family would eat them together and drink tea. He was glad to be returning home instead of going to work. Since the wedding, three months earlier, he had found himself wanting to be home more often. When he was out in the world, he felt as if there were too much of himself.

Soon after the bus started, there was a commotion in the back. A twelve-year-old boy was trying to get on without paying. The conductor was hunched over, his arms wrapped around the boy, who then lurched backward and dropped to the floor, slipping from the conductor's grip. Within a few seconds, the boy had crawled to the middle of the bus. He was wearing blue shorts and a dirty white shirt that was too big for him.

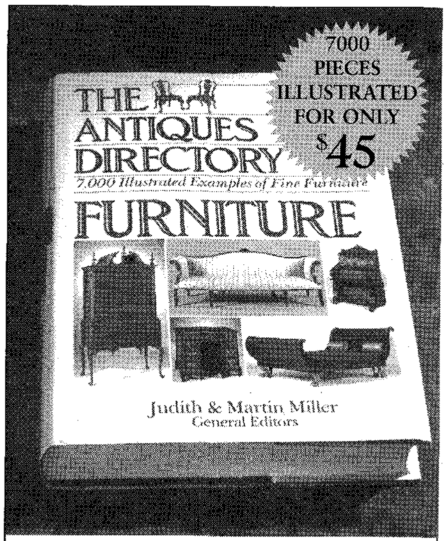
As the boy got up, he began to sing. He stood confidently, with one hand in his pocket, swaying a little with the motion of the bus.

He sang without appearing to pay attention to the song, but his voice was so steady, emotional, and intelligent that Ram Karan was startled. He himself had once been a very good singer, and this almost forgotten talent had remained one of the secret sources of his own sense of himself. Meeting someone else who could sing as he had sung made him uneasy.

The boy's first song was well known. It was about a saint who had gone on a fast to persuade God to end a drought



"Around here, Walker, we prefer the term 'fallen angel.'"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and had died as the rains started. In the boy's mouth, the saint seemed to have a pride that Ram Karan had never noticed before.

"Here," a young woman said, and held out a two-rupee note to the boy.

The boy started an Amitab Bachan song about all the fat, short, tall, thin wives a man could have and what it meant for his happiness. The song was famous from the movies, and went over even better than the one about the saint. This time several passengers held up money for the boy and tried talking to him in a friendly way when he came around to collect it. He only said thank you.

"For every song I now sing, I want fifty rupees," the boy then announced. Ram Karan had never heard a street performer make such a demand.

"A heart is such a heavy thing that we're always looking to give it away," the boy sang sweetly, and Ram Karan closed his eyes to listen. Ever since Arun got married and got his new job, Ram Karan's life had changed: parts of what he had always imagined to be his fixed nature seemed to be leaving him. He had not been drunk in months. He was rarely angry. Now that he had completed one of his great responsibilities—marrying off his elder son—he had begun to see that his final task of protecting Ajay would not be impossible. Or perhaps he just felt old.

For the first song, the boy gathered sixty-eight rupees. For the next, he received fifty-four. But for the third he got only forty-one. Ram Karan wondered if he was going to show some contempt for his audience.

"Thank you," the boy said, grinning. He then went to the front steps of the bus and stood there without looking back. When his stop came, the boy turned and shouted "Goodbye!" and then got off.

On the sidewalk, he walked with purpose, as if he were going somewhere in particular. The bus started, and the boy was out of sight.

Ram Karan bought samosas on his way home. In the flat, Arun and Vibha were reading a magazine together. Ajay was doing his homework. While Ratha made tea, Ram Karan climbed onto the roof and stood in the rain like the rest of the old men. ◆

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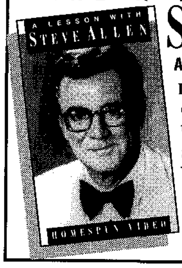

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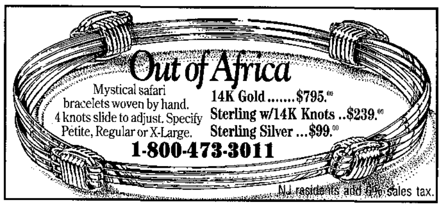

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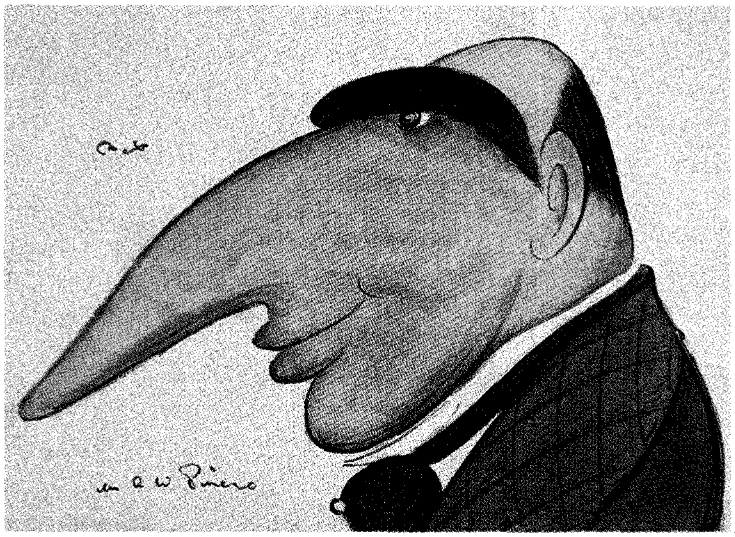
A CRITIC AT LARGE

PORTRAITS BY MAX

Max Beerbohm and the art of puncturing pretension.

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

THE club of serious practitioners of both the literary and the visual arts is small—its members include Michelangelo, Blake, Rossetti, Thackeray, Lear, Thurber, and Max Beerbohm—and it is in Beerbohm that they are most closely connected. "Lucky enough to be equally gifted in two artistic media," W. H. Auden wrote of him, "and without any ambition to transcend his limitations, he made his caricatures and his writings between them say everything that was in him to say." Beerbohm himself felt that as he grew older the two arts, dissimilar in nature though they might be, were in him becoming more and more similar. And so do they appear today. His draftsman's line seems the perfect visual equivalent of his prose, his prose the perfect verbal equivalent of his line. Both his drawings and his writing feature meticulous attention to detail, energized by the spirit of parody and set aloft by the merriest of malice.



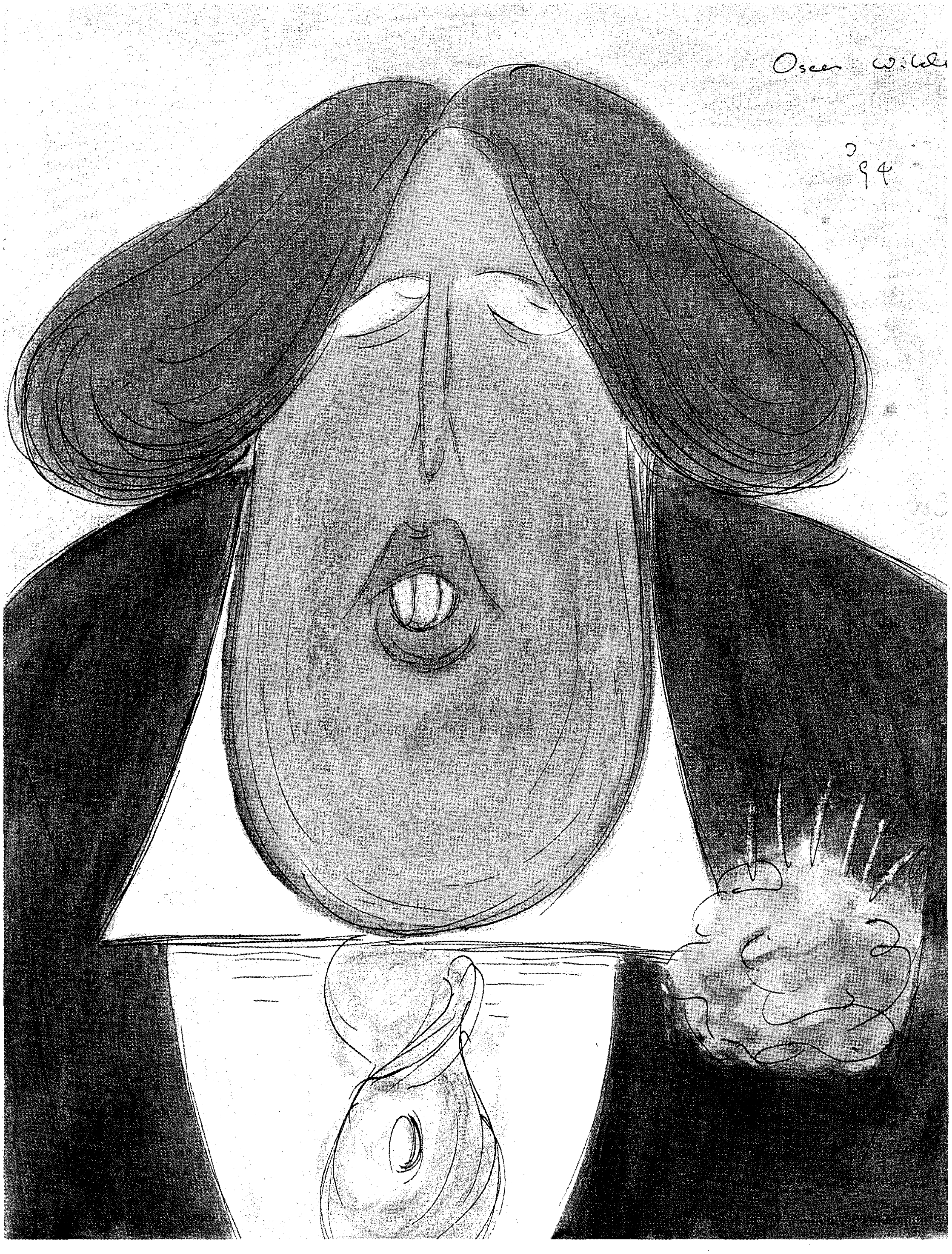
Born in London in 1872, Max Beerbohm was the youngest of the three surviving children of his father's second marriage. Precocious at everything, he was a well-known figure at Oxford before he left it—as many talented people did—without bothering to take a degree. Essayist, parodist, caricaturist, dandy—he was in all things a stylist. "You must take up literature," Oscar Wilde told him. "You have a style like a silver dagger." He returned to London, where he became famous after publishing a slender volume of essays, entitled "The Works of Max Beerbohm." He succeeded George Bernard Shaw as the drama critic at the English *Saturday Review*, where he worked, beginning at the age of twenty-five, for twelve years. It was Shaw who stuck him with the sobriquet of the Incomparable Max, to which Beerbohm characteristically riposted, "Compare me." In "A Christmas Garland" (1912) Beerbohm produced the single best book of literary parodies in English, but from the very beginning he had an exact sense of his own gift. "How many charming talents have been spoiled by the instilled desire to do 'important' work!" he wrote. "Some people are born to lift heavy weights. Some are born to juggle with golden balls." He never saw himself as other than a juggler. He was the world's greatest minor writer.

What made Max Beerbohm's malice merry was its distant, generally impersonal, and always playful quality. He could not ignore the ridiculous, or resist reproducing it in drawings or describing it in prose. He had the eye of the natural caricaturist. He once asked S. N. Behrman, "Have you ever noticed that all hot-water bottles look like Henry the Eighth?" He combined stylishness with cultivated common sense—he was an aesthete firmly anchored in reality—and the combination remains immensely appealing. Of D. H. Lawrence he remarked, "He never realized, don't you know—he never suspected that to be stark staring mad is somewhat of a handicap to a writer." He took out Freudianism with a single sentence: "They were a tense and peculiar family, the Oedipuses, weren't they?" The common-sense strain comes out more emphatically in his prose than in his drawings, yet the desertion of common sense in the creation of personality was one of the first qualifications for becoming the subject of a Beerbohm caricature.

BEERBOHM never had any formal artistic instruction, but drawing came easier to him than writing. He was slow with his pen—"I am not a dash-off writer"—but quick with his pencil. He also thought himself crueller with it: "As a writer, I was kindly, I think—Jekyll—but as a caricaturist I was Hyde." He called himself "a ruthless monstrifier of men." In a useful text accompanying the handsome volume "Max Beerbohm Caricatures" (Yale; $45) N. John Hall reports that Edmund Gosse informed Logan Pearsall Smith in a letter that Beerbohm had done a caricature of him, adding, "You won't like it, but you must pretend you do. You can console yourself at any rate with the thought that it will give uncommon pleasure to your friends." Beerbohm thought it all good fun, but, of course, the intensity of a slap is registered on the cheek of the person who receives it.

He was not heedless of this, and two of his most elaborate drawings feature victims of his caricaturist's art imploring him to cease and desist. One carries the caption "Mr Max Beerbohm receives an influential, though biassed, deputation, urging him, in the cause of our common humanity, and of good taste, to give over." The other, carrying the caption "One fine morning, or, How they might undo me," shows a parade of his favorite victims bereft of what he called their "salient" features: Arthur Pinero is without his minkish eyebrows; Kipling's aggressive jaw is somewhat receded; George Bernard Shaw is, for once, well turned out.

"The Spirit of Caricature," a Beerbohm essay of 1901, professes to explain what impelled his drawings. The caricaturist, he wrote, "eschews any kind of symbolism, tells no story, deals with no matter but the personal appearance of its subject." Caricature, he claimed, does not imply any moral judgment on its subject. "Therefore, the carica-


Oscar Wild
'94

A. W. Pinero (opposite) and Oscar Wilde. "You must take up literature," Wilde told Beerbohm. "You have a style like a silver dagger."

turist, though he may feel the deepest reverence for the man whom he is drawing, will not make him one jot less ridiculous than he has made another man whom he despises." Living up to his own prescription, Beerbohm drew his dear friends Reggie Turner and Will Rothenstein as, respectively, mildly grotesque and coarsely aggressive. He never ceased to mock Henry James, whom he admired above all modern novelists, and, on one occasion, drew him kneeling with his ear to a hotel-room door—at which pairs of female and male shoes stand—presumably learning about sex, and, on another, drew him doubled up in great physical discomfort, with a caption reading, "Mr Henry James in the act of parturiating a sentence."

A comely physical appearance supplied no assurances either, because, according to Beerbohm, "handsomeness *can* be made as ridiculous as ugliness." His drawing of Byron, carrying the caption "Lord Byron shaking the dust of England from his shoes," is a perfect example: the poet, rather too carefully coiffed, wearing a cape and checked trousers, and with his hooded eyes closed, sends a delicately booted foot backward in a vain little kick. As for a subject that is neither handsome nor ugly, "it is the lack of features that must be exaggerated." For an illustration of this, see any of the more than thirty Beerbohm drawings of the now nearly forgotten writer George Moore, his wispy mustache drooping off an otherwise nearly featureless face—a perfect representation of the physically vapid.

Beerbohm was happiest when he could capture a personality in a few strokes. I like him best when the parodic note sounds strongest in his drawings, as when, for example, he does Aubrey Beardsley in the manner of Beardsley himself: limp at the wrist, tiny of foot, all hairdo and nose and jawbone, and no eyes at all. I believe I can recognize a Beerbohm caricature—like every good artist, Beerbohm left fingerprints on everything he did—but, because of the element of parody in his work, he had no unitary, uniform style. Even so, Beerbohm was unique among the great caricaturists in that he had at his disposal the ability to compose captions that in some of his work caused caricature to blend into brilliant cartoon. Thus a little girl, her back to us, confronts a large man with a leering smile and one elbow resting on a mantel, above a caption that reads, "Mr Matthew Arnold. To him, Miss Mary Augusta, his niece: 'Why, Uncle Matthew, oh why, will not you be always wholly serious?' " My own favorite Beerbohm caricature is from the book "Rossetti and His Circle" (1922) and shows a bloodless and slouching John Stuart Mill, the very model of insipidity, carrying galley proofs in a little leather bag and being introduced to Rossetti by John Morley, before a luxuriant Rossetti portrait, above the following caption:

> "It has recently," [Morley] says, "occurred to Mr Mill that in his life-long endeavour to catch and keep the ear of the nation he has been hampered by a certain deficiency in—well, in warmth, in colour, in rich charm. I have told him that this deficiency (I do not regard it as a defect) might possibly be remedied by *you*. Mr Mill has in the press at this moment a new work, entitled 'The Subjection of Women.' From my slight acquaintance with you, and from all that I have seen and heard of your work, I gather that women greatly interest you, and I have no doubt that you are incensed by their subjection. Mr Mill has brought his proof-sheets with him. He will read them to you. I believe, and he takes my word for it, that a series of illustrative paintings by you would" etc., etc.

Rossetti, a sensualist of the highest power, feigns paying serious attention to this preposterous request.

MAX BEERBOHM drew some two thousand formal caricatures, and N. John Hall has included two hundred and thirteen of them in his book. His selection is a fine one. He has the splendid advantage of reproducing many of these from the original watercolors. Hall also provides useful remarks on Beerbohm's technique, and a number of Beerbohm's own comments on his quality as a caricaturist. "Max Beerbohm Caricatures" is an elegant book—one of those rare productions which demonstrate that sound scholarship can be put at the service of pure pleasure. What the book doesn't do is settle the question of how large a role contempt played in the artistic work of Max Beerbohm. Hall writes of Beerbohm's repeated caricatures of the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, "There are those who feel Max despised Edward, but their view fails to take into account Max's sense of fun, his love of irony, his genuine delight in anything touching the ridiculous, his broad sympathy for simple souls, whatever their position in life." Can this be so?

In "The Spirit of Caricature," and elsewhere, Beerbohm made it seem as if he merely recorded what he had seen: setting out the "salient" points—a weak chin here, sloping shoulders there—and then breaking for tea on the terrace of the Villino Chiaro, his home in Rapallo, to which he had decamped in 1910 with his wife, the American actress Florence Kahn. Although Beerbohm did acknowledge a monstrifying side to his art, his natural sense of playfulness made the sendup more congenial to him than the put-down. When the journalist Otto Friedrich visited him in Rapallo, Beerbohm asserted that everyone in the United States, even the simplest farmer, was still endlessly reading the novels of Joseph Conrad.

Beerbohm was never savage, but this doesn't mean that he couldn't be devastating. In his 1910 essay "How Shall I Word It?"—a sendup of a guide to epistolary etiquette—he writes a series of quite vicious letters, giving way, as he says, to the natural craving such a book incites for "some little outburst of wrath, of hatred or malice." He then supplies, in excellent quality, exhibitions of such wrath, hatred, and malice by turning what should be bread-and-butter letters into hemlock-and-poison-mushroom ones. As he is getting up a good wind, the essay suddenly ends, with Beerbohm announcing, "But enough! I never thought I should be so strong in this line. I had not foreseen such copiousness and fatal fluency. Never again will I tap these deep dark reservoirs in a character that had always seemed to me, on the whole, so amiable."

The odd thing is that as Beerbohm grew older his views did not grow darker. In fact, in 1930, at the age of fifty-eight (he lived to be eighty-three), he ceased to draw, at least for exhibition or publication. "I found that my caricatures were becoming likenesses," he reported. "I seem to have mislaid my gift for dispraise. Pity crept in. So I gave up caricaturing, except privately." Pity will not do for a caricaturist. It will, indeed, undo him.

Yet Max Beerbohm saw the world as more than faintly ridiculous. I think he viewed human pretensions—and to be human is to be, ipso facto, pretentious—as simply preposterous. As his many self-caricatures show, Beerbohm saw himself as a dandified, slightly saddened spectator, whose job it was to put laughter into the human comedy. "Only the insane take themselves quite seriously," he wrote. He bore a grudge against most geniuses—against Goethe, against Samuel Johnson, even against Shaw—in part because he thought that none took themselves more seriously. Neither detestation nor admiration stood in the way of his view that we are all, either vaguely or patently, a little absurd, as, of course, we all are. And no one has ever discovered a more elegantly witty way of making this plain. ♦

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WISE GUY

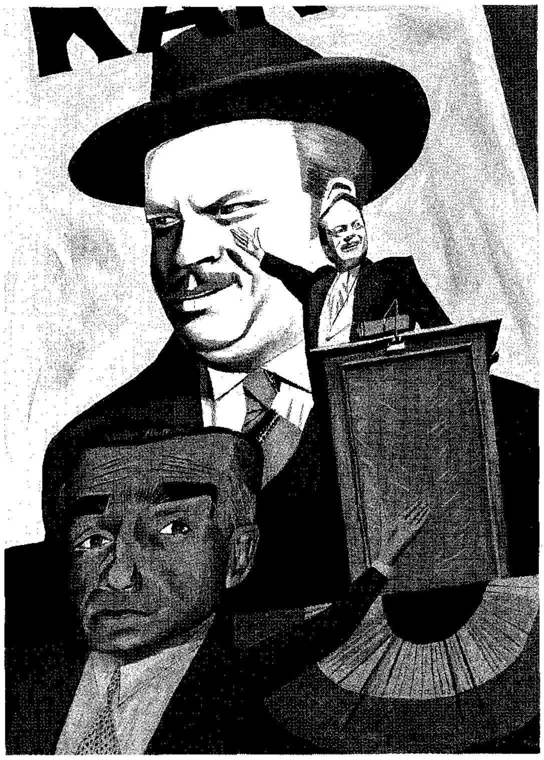
How Martin Scorsese works the system.

BY LOUIS MENAND

MARTIN SCORSESE'S "Raging Bull" took nearly two years to make. The boxing scenes alone needed ten weeks to shoot; mixing in the sound effects needed twenty-three. Scorsese spent half a day trying to reproduce the sound of a shirt being ripped. By the end, he was working from nine in the morning until two at night. Shortly before the movie was scheduled for release, his producer, Irwin Winkler, called to say that the film had to be at the lab by midnight on Sunday or they would not have a print for the opening the following Friday. On Sunday night, Winkler showed up to collect the movie, but Scorsese still wasn't ready. He was unhappy with a scene in which a minor character orders a drink in a night club: he didn't think you could hear the words "Cutty Sark." Winkler watched the scene and told Scorsese he could hear the words "Cutty Sark" fine, and that in any case the movie was finished. "If you can't hear Cutty Sark," Winkler said, "it's just too bad." Scorsese looked at Winkler. "I'm taking my name off the picture," he said.

We're accustomed to talking about Hollywood name directors—directors like Scorsese and Steven Spielberg and Brian De Palma—as artists with a personal vision. But it's always tricky to explain just how that vision becomes, well, visible. After a director has made ten or fifteen pictures, we have something we can call an oeuvre, which, on examination, is usually found to consist of movies in a variety of genres and based on scripts by a variety of screenwriters. Scorsese has made a "personal" film ("Mean Streets"), what used to be called a "woman's picture" ("Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"), a couple of dramas about psycho types ("Taxi Driver" and "The King of Comedy"), and a couple of gangster pictures ("GoodFellas" and "Casino"). He has directed a musical ("New York, New York") and a concert movie ("The Last Waltz," about The Band). "Raging Bull" is a bio-pic; "The Last Temptation of Christ" and "The Age of Innocence" are literary adaptations. "After Hours" is a black comedy. "The Color of Money" is a sequel (to "The Hustler"); "Cape Fear" is a remake. He is about to release "Kundun," about the fate of Tibet, which most moviegoers will assume is a political-cause movie.

Directors who demonstrate this kind of range are honored for their mastery



Scorsese admires directors who bravely assert their independence of the moneybags.

MARK ULRIKSEN

What is the sound of one jaw chewing on a mouse?

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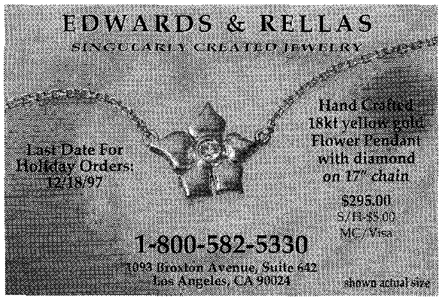
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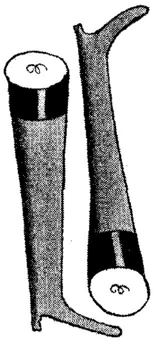
of film technique, and Scorsese is one of the preëminent contemporary film technicians. "Mean Streets," with its vernacular rhythms and demotic performances, set a standard for movie naturalism; the famous two-minute Steadicam shot of Ray Liotta and Lorraine Bracco entering the Copa through the kitchen, in "GoodFellas," has already become material for imitative homage (in the opening scene of "Boogie Nights," for instance).



But where is the directorial signature? A camera angle is just a camera angle; a jump cut is a jump cut. They don't reflect a sensibility. The usual thing to say about Scorsese's sensibility is that he is obsessed with obsession: that he likes the temperature of his stories hot, and places the violent emotions graphically in the foreground. Joe Pesci screaming obscenities in his piggy voice while stabbing someone to death with a pen (a scene in "Casino") is the sort of thing people think of as "Scorsesian." Scorsese has directed a lot of scenes like this. But what gives his work its real interest and distinction is not the craft but the intellectual grasp. Scorsese may or may not be a passionate guy. He is an extremely cerebral filmmaker. However big a political cause du jour in Hollywood Tibet may be, "Kundun" does not make a political statement and is not a cause movie. It's a Scorsese movie.

Scorsese has not exactly gone out of his way, of course, to discourage the idea that he makes movies about obsessive people because he is a bit of an obsessive himself. "My whole life has been movies and religion. That's it. Nothing else," he told reporters when "The Last Temptation of Christ" was being attacked by fundamentalists, and even by a few non-fundamentalists, like Franco Zeffirelli, before it had been released. He had to fight to get that movie made after it was turned down by Barry Diller at Paramount four weeks before shooting was scheduled to start. He had to fight to preserve the original cut of "Taxi Driver," and then, after John Hinckley named the movie as his personal inspiration, to defend it against self-appointed guardians of the commonweal, like Ted Turner, who thought the filmmakers should be on trial with Hinckley.

Scorsese launched an aggressive and successful crusade to force Eastman Kodak to improve the color stock used for movies, so that the colors wouldn't fade so quickly (one of the reasons he decided to shoot "Raging Bull" in black and white). And "Kundun" seems designed for trouble. Scorsese's own studio, Disney, has already publicly signalled its discomfort with the project by retaining Henry Kissinger to murmur his special brand of geocommercial sweet talk into high-level Chinese ears. ("Quietly and discreetly, Michael Eisner, the chairman of Disney, has hired Mr. Kissinger as an adviser in the company's dealings with China," the *Times* reported. From what quiet and discreet source do you imagine that the *Times* got that tip?) Most of the controversies over art and censorship since the nineteen-sixties have concerned work that is itself comparatively trivial—"Piss Christ" and 2 Live Crew. For twenty-five years, Scorsese has been creating art that people care about, and also care to fight about.

Scorsese's own position is that he makes movies, for the most part, about the world he knows. He is not a didactic filmmaker (something that distinguishes him from another controversial director, who was once his student at New York University, Oliver Stone); he is not interested in judging his characters, or in justifying them to us. Audiences tend to have trouble with characters like Travis Bickle, in "Taxi Driver," and Jake La Motta, in "Raging Bull"—we're used to being told what to think of people like that—but in Scorsese's view this is the way these people are; the director's obligation is not to gentrify it. The obsessiveness, the obscenity, and the brutality are just what you naturally find crawling around when you decide to tear up for inspection that particular chunk of turf.

The main character in "Life Lessons," the brilliant short that Scorsese made in 1989, from a screenplay by Richard Price, for the anthology film "New York Stories," is an artist who deliberately churns himself into an emotional frenzy in order to paint, which, eventually, we see him do in great spasms of spontaneous energy. His name is Lionel Dobie, and he's an upscale version of Jake La Motta, who has to convince himself that his opponent is sleeping with his wife in order to get into the proper frame of mind for beating him to a pulp. Dobie and La Motta are method actors in other media. Motion pictures, though, are not created in spasms of spontaneous energy. It takes a second to rip a shirt or land a punch; it takes hours to get it properly encoded on celluloid. Scorsese takes the encoding process very seriously.

"A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese Through American Movies" (Miramax Books/Hyperion; $40), by Scorsese and Michael Henry Wilson, is a look at the technical side of Scorsese's talent. The book is adapted from a three-part documentary that Scorsese made in 1995 for the British Film Institute. Like Scorsese himself, who narrates and is onscreen a good deal of the time, the film is engaging, nervy, and brisk; it mixes some famous sequences from American movies with some offbeat and obscure ones. (It will be available here on videotape sometime next year.) The book, of course, has to rely on stills (all of which, despite the fact that Scorsese has quite a bit to say about the use of color, are reproduced in black and white), and a lot of Scorsese's personality is lost in print. But there are some revealing things.

One is the degree to which Scorsese's idea of the movies was fixed at a specific moment—the sixties, when he was a film student at New York University and auteurism was in vogue. "A Personal Journey" is almost exclusively about the studio director, who is presented as a person in a life-and-death struggle with an entity called Hollywood for artistic control of the product. The great director is one who contrives to "smuggle" (as Scorsese puts it) his personal vision into the mass-market formula he has been assigned to turn into a picture. It doesn't matter whether the film is an epic or a B-movie gangster picture. What matters is the bravado or the ingenuity with which the director is able to assert his independence of the moneybags. "I've always seen film as a means of self-expression," Scorsese says. "Most of all I've been interested in the directors, especially the ones who circumvented the system to get their vision onto the screen."

The Hollywood in which John Ford and Howard Hawks are supposed to have transformed hack fiction into modern art is, of course, long gone. It was eventually replaced, in the early seventies, by a Hollywood pleased to place large sums of money in the hands of young film-school-trained directors like, for example, Martin Scorsese. Scorsese concedes that Hollywood has changed, but he has a perverse nostalgia for the old studio days, and he likes to think of himself as locked in a mortal embrace with the system. "As early as I can remember," he says, "the key issue for me was: What does it take to be a filmmaker in Hollywood? Even today I still wonder what it takes to be a professional or even an artist in Hollywood. How do you survive the constant tug of war between personal expression and commercial imperatives? What is the price you pay to work in Hollywood?"

One of the differences between the old directors and the new, though, is how much more the new ones enjoy talking about their work. Few of the studio directors bought into the notion of themselves as auteurs; they tended to be derisive of the idea that they were doing anything more high-minded than sticking a camera in front of a horse. There is a nice clip in the documentary from an interview that Peter Bogdanovich—another seventies Wunderkind—filmed with John Ford in 1971. (The questions all reflect the auteurist conception of what a director like Ford was up to.)

BOGDANOVICH *(off camera)*: Mr. Ford, I've noticed that your view of the West has become increasingly sad and melancholy over the years. Comparing for instance "Wagon Master" to "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," have you been aware of that change in mood?

FORD (*curtly*): No. (*Very curtly*) No.

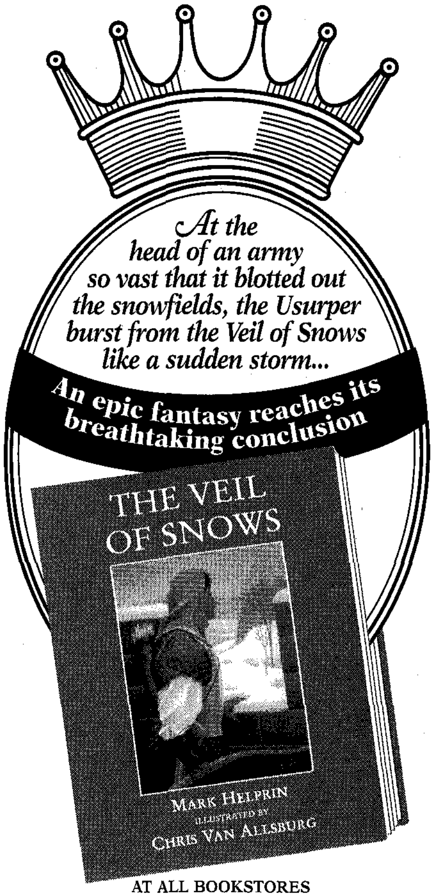
BOGDANOVICH (*jollying*): Now that I pointed that out, is there anything you'd like to say about it?

FORD (*unjollied*): I don't know what you're talking about.

BOGDANOVICH (*small desperation*): Can I ask you what particular element about the Western appealed to you from the beginning?

FORD: I wouldn't know.

BOGDANOVICH (*swallows hard*): Would you agree that the point of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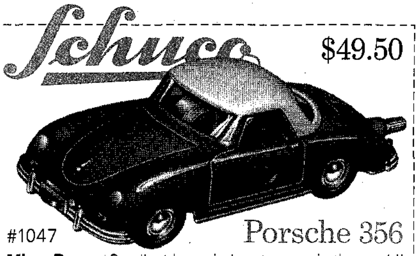

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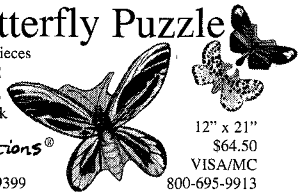

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“Fort Apache” was that the tradition of the Army was more important than one individual?

Ford: Cut!

THE emphasis on directors in “A Personal Journey” is a little odd from a man whose career has been so famously bound up with actors, and with one actor in particular. “I’ve been very lucky,” Scorsese remarked recently in a conversation published in the *Times Magazine*. “And part of that in the ’70s was because of the combination with Bob De Niro. The studios went with him as the actor. . . . They figured, well sure, as long as you have Bob in a part.” But De Niro wasn’t just Scorsese’s ticket to the money. He was, as Scorsese has acknowledged many times, a key collaborator.

The most famous scene in “Mean Streets”—the great “Joey Clams” monologue, which De Niro’s Johnny Boy delivers to Harvey Keitel’s Charlie in the back room of the bar—was De Niro’s idea, and an improvisation. It was De Niro who persuaded Scorsese (whose principal knowledge of boxing was that it was the incredibly boring stuff you used to have to sit through at the movies while you were waiting for the feature to start) to make “Raging Bull.” De Niro persuaded an equally reluctant Paul Schrader to write a screenplay, and then took Scorsese to the island of St. Martin for several weeks (“which is hard for me,” Scorsese later explained, “because as far as I’m concerned there’s only one island, Manhattan”) to rewrite it. De Niro’s performance in the movie was heroic. People make jokes about the fifty pounds he put on to play the part of the older La Motta. But this was a movie about the damage people do to themselves, and those fifty pounds made the picture.

In the beginning, Scorsese had little interest in actors. “Marty, you don’t know a fucking thing about acting,” the star of his first student movie once informed him. He learned fast. The utter naturalism of the acting in many of his pictures comes from a willingness to let things happen in front of the camera—which means being extremely well prepared for things to happen in front of the camera. “Funny how? How am I funny?,” Joe Pesci’s memorable scene in “GoodFellas,” came out of an improvisation. The scenes in the Phoenix diner with the three mismatched waitresses in “Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore” were so compelling in their apparently offhand way that they became the basis for a sitcom. It was an inspiration to cast Jerry Lewis in the part of the talk-show king Jerry Langford in “The King of Comedy” (a movie that is, in most other respects, among the ones that got away). “Kundun” is cast almost entirely with Tibetan and Chinese amateurs.

THINKING about every movie in terms of other movies has its limitations, and when Scorsese has gone off the track this is usually why. His conception for “New York, New York” was that each sequence would be filmed in the style of the movies produced in the year when the action was taking place: it would look like a movie made in 1947, then like a movie made in 1950, and so on. The sets were to be artificial and stylized, in the tradition of the studio musicals, but the acting was to be improvisational and the cinematography was to be done in the style of a documentary. The result, as Scorsese correctly described it many years later, was a car crash.

When Scorsese was making “The Last Temptation of Christ,” he was certain that he did not want to make something that looked like “King of Kings.” “ ‘King of Kings’ is a lie,” he said. Instead, it should look like “Rebel Without a Cause”: “In the opening shot where Dean’s drunk and they pick him up and take him to the police station and he has such anger that he doesn’t know how to direct it. . . . There should be something of that in the cross-making scene.” The idea of borrowing affect for the Jesus story from James Dean is—paradoxically, in the case of a movie Hollywood was so reluctant to make—deeply Hollywood. “I wanted him to be a character you cared about when he died,” Scorsese explained to the press when the movie was screened at the Venice Film Festival. That was one of the few times he has ever sounded like Louis B. Mayer.

He did not make the same mistake with “Kundun,” which is shot with an elegiac and chaste gravity. The music, by Philip Glass, is perfectly chosen—strange and pure. The movie is the life of the present Dalai Lama from his birth until he goes into exile following the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese Communists. It does not seem an obvious story for a director associated with wise guys, but Scorsese has handled it in his own way.

Most of the characters in “Kundun” are men, and there is something about the culture of the all-male pack which Scorsese has always been drawn to. “Marty once wanted me to write about Modigliani and his circle of friends in Paris at the turn of the century,” Richard Price says in “Martin Scorsese: A Journey,” by Mary Pat Kelly, which was reissued last year. “And I said, ‘I don’t know anything about that.’ ‘Just make ’em guys,’ he said. ‘They’re just guys. Make ’em guys, and they’re on the make, and they want to be artists.’ ” Jesus and his disciples in “The Last Temptation of Christ” had a little too much of this quality (although any movie that casts Harvey Keitel, Barbara Hershey, André Gregory, Harry Dean Stanton, and David Bowie as characters from the Bible is in trouble to begin with).

In “Kundun,” the guyness is not a problem with the movie; it’s part of the problem the characters face, just as it is in “Mean Streets” and “GoodFellas” and “Casino.” Those movies are about little worlds that get eaten up by the big world, and so is “Kundun.” The point is made with tact (possibly with too much tact), but “Kundun” interprets

MEZZO DIVA

Opera lovers are calling Vesselina Kasarova the Bulgarian Bartoli, but the cheers that greeted the New York début of this young mezzo-soprano last week (in Rossini’s “Tancredi,” at Carnegie Hall) were for a singer whose gifts more pointedly recall those of Maria Callas. Kasarova trained as a concert pianist before switching to vocal studies at the Academy of Sofia, and she is already a star in Europe. She makes her Met début this month, as Rosina in “The Barber of Seville,” a prima-donna vehicle that should give her plenty of opportunity to show off her brilliant vocal palette, her technical agility, and a stage presence that combines the aura of an old-fashioned diva with a spontaneity that seems utterly modern.

Photograph by Max Vadukul

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the destruction of Tibet as the story of a society that was doomed by the belief that if it kept reproducing itself ritualistically from generation to generation it would be safe from change forever—like Little Italy before the drugs and the Feds, like Las Vegas before the corporations kicked the mobsters out, like Hollywood before the studios were brought down by television and their own philistine stupidity. "Kundun" is "Casino" with Buddhists.

Scorsese is an anthropologist at heart. This accounts for his moral disinterestedness and his artistic perfectionism—explains why it's important to hear the words "Cutty Sark" in "Raging Bull." Cutty Sark is what that guy, in that club, in that year, would order. Scorsese is always careful to choose for his soundtracks songs the characters could actually have heard at the time the action is set. For "The Age of Innocence" (another tale of a lost world), Scorsese hired as "etiquette consultant" on the picture a woman whose grandmother had been a friend of Edith Wharton's. He was pleased when experts noticed that the characters all use the appropriate china and silver in the dinner scenes.

There is a lot of information in Scorsese's movies, and the details tell a story. One of the first shots in "Kundun" is from the point of view of a tiny child: the future Dalai Lama. He sees his parents' feet, just their feet, in their Tibetan sandals, moving across the floor of his room. Much later in the film, the Dalai Lama, now a man, is talking with Mao Zedong, trying to persuade him to spare Tibet. He suddenly looks down and sees Mao's shiny black Western-style shoes, and he knows that his culture is doomed. ♦

FUTURE TENSE

Musing on mortality in the post-Apocalyptic suburbs.

BY JOYCE CAROL OATES

John Updike

SET in the near future in mythical Haskells Crossing, Massachusetts, an affluent and sequestered oceanfront suburb north of Boston, John Updike's eighteenth novel and forty-eighth book, "Toward the End of Time" (Knopf; \$25), bears an oblique kinship with Updike's first novel, "The Poorhouse Fair" (1959), similarly set in the near future, though amid the impoverished elderly. In "The Poorhouse Fair," a comparatively pastoral fiction, American culture has become Hispanicized, and much of the population seems to be institutionalized in "swelling poorhouses" as part of the process of Settling:

> —an increasingly common term that covered the international stalemate, the general economic equality, the population shifts to the "vacuum states," and the well-publicized physical theory of entropia, the tendency of the universe toward eventual homogeneity. . . . This end was inevitable, no new cause for heterogeneity being foreseen.

Near the conclusion of "Toward the End of Time," a seemingly mystical "heavenly circle," a torus, appears to the narrator, who links it to cycles of human belief and nonbelief, or human delusion and intellectual freedom:

> To generations its presence is evident and the source of omens, miracles, admonitions, and reassurances. People live by its wan light, sing its praises while they work. . . . Then it gradually dims, succumbing to mockery and disproof. The generations grow bored with repeating the pieties of their fathers; a cry for human freedom and self-expression rises. . . . The altars are slighted; the temples fall into mossy ruin.

The contemporary world is this fallen world, yet "the world by itself is not enough; there must be another"—and, in time, like an elliptically orbiting comet, the torus reappears. People can't endure without supernaturalism of some kind, however remote from their personal lives.

"Toward the End of Time" takes up such issues fairly lightly, for its narrator, Ben Turnbull, is, at sixty-six, rather more concerned with his waning sexual powers than with the waning of the universe. Like the aging retirees of Updike's recent short-story collection "The Afterlife," he's frightened, resentful, embittered about his body's "accumulating failures" and his position in a "twilight of inconsequence." The morbidly narcissistic Ben, a retired investment counsellor who can't look back upon his life with much pleasure or pride, nonetheless wants to leave something of himself behind by "scribbling these disjunct and jumpy notes" concerning an idle, precarious existence in the Earthly year 2020. Like Updike, Ben is gifted with 20/20 vision and sees things, including himself, with painful, pitiless clarity:

> I had looked down once again into the dismal basement of life, where in ill-lit corners spiders brainlessly entrap segmented insects, consume them bit by bit, leave a fuzzy egg sac, and die. All those leggy spider corpses... did they perish of starvation, having spun a web in vain, or of old age, in the natural course of things, after years of drawing upon Medicare and Social Security?

Though in some ways the most inventive of his myriad fictions, Updike's new novel is, like "The Poorhouse Fair," at heart a wholly realist work, saturated in memory, emotion, meditation, and that staple of realistic fiction human relations. Its often inspired, and funny, "futurist" detail serves the function of ectoplasmic daubs on a photograph: it isn't really integral to Ben Turnbull's experience as aging lecher, eventual prostate-cancer patient, a fantasist who compensates for his narrow life by drifting into what he calls "parallel universes." Cranky, maudlin, and nasty by turns, now poetic, now crude, yet continuously a rapt witness to what's about him, Ben seems rather more like eighty-six than sixty-six, and his preoccupation with his own advancing age highlights those prevailing Updike themes: an almost Thurberesque view of the war between the sexes (Ben is convinced that his younger, far more energetic wife, Gloria, eagerly anticipates widowhood, awaiting his death like a "cheerful, soigné vulture") and what the similarly obsessed Renaissance poets called mutability—the inexorable gravitational tug of death and dissolution. (Ben writes that his "bed seems a slant surface from which I might fall into an abyss.") For all its strangeness, this is a familiar world, in which time's arrow flies in the direction of "well-publicized" entropy and men rail against women who are no longer sexually attracted to them. It is hardly a tragic world, for tragedy implies grandeur and dignity, but, rather, a broken, twilit world, in which even the art of fiction is dismissed: "that clacking, crudely carpentered old roller coaster, every up and down mocked by the triviality . . . of human experience, its Sisyphean repetitiveness."

If not tragedy, then comedy. A cheerily bleak black comedy, in which, as Ben laconically informs us, there have been catastrophic events that haven't (for reasons the novel doesn't make entirely clear) much affected him and his upper-middle-class Caucasian New England neighbors: the financial crash of 2000; a four-month Sino-American conflict that left millions of Chinese and Americans dead and much of the United States a radioactive wasteland; the dissolution of the federal government. Oceans are nearly exhausted of fish. Malevolent new mouse-size inorganic species called "metallobioforms" ("oil-eaters" and "spark-eaters") have emerged. Earth's atmosphere is so polluted that the very stars have become dull and hazy. With the weakening of governments, FedEx has gone into the protection racket, extorting money from anxious affluent homeowners like Ben.

Yet instead of nightmare there's a reassuring grid of the comically banal in Haskells Crossing, where citizens read the Boston *Globe* and the New York *Times*, still delivered to their homes; they seem to have access to food, out of what cornucopia we can't imagine, and they prepare it in microwave ovens; they watch TV, mulch their fussy suburban gardens and fret over deer, marauding woodchucks, and occasional squatters on their property; they play golf and ski and, of course, bicker with their aging spouses, like "The Honeymooners" seven decades later. ("After a certain age marriage is mostly, its bitter and tender moments both, a mental game of thrust and parry played on the edge of the grave.") Ben's "elderly proximity to death" drives him into fantasies of more passionate lives, in which, variously, he's the robust lover of a doe-turned-woman and of a thirteen-year-old Nabokovian nymphet. Perhaps less convincingly, he's a companion of St. Paul, someone known to us as the author of the Biblical Gospel according to Mark. Ben is also a ninth-century Irish monk slaughtered by a pagan Norseman, a sadistic Nazi hitting a captive Jew (who resembles Ben's own physician), and a lone human being in a mysterious primal-symbiotic relationship with an immense fungus. All these are curious, wayward adventures that seem merely coincidental to 2020 A.D.—as indeed the futurist setting seems merely coincidental to Ben's experience. (Compare, for instance, the intensely imagined contemporary literary novels "The Handmaid's Tale," by Margaret Atwood, and "Fiskadoro," by Denis Johnson.)

UPDIKE'S prose, as always, is distinguished by passages of lyric beauty even amid the despairing rubble of Ben Turnbull's cobwebbed cellar. The prose-poem interludes in which, for instance, Ben recalls his impoverished rural childhood, dominated by a passionate, aggrieved mother and a hapless father, echo similar passages in other works of Updike's, from the early, gracefully elegiac short stories and the boldly Joycean nostalgia of "The Centaur" (1963) to the lapidary writer's prose, and these passages ring with emotional urgency:

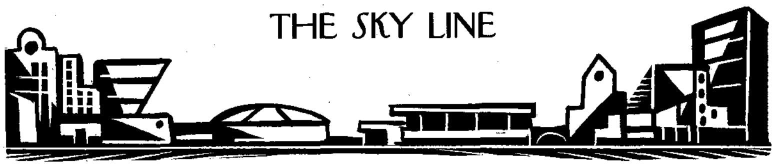
> At the kitchen table during a quarrel—my parents' quarrels were always about the same thing, it seemed to me, about there not being *enough*—she would fold her arms and hide her grief-reddened face in them, terrifying me, for her face was the face of life to me, and I could not bear to have it hid. I witnessed so many tears of anger and frustration and pain on my mother's face, there in our bleak house . . . that I wonder if my heart was not permanently hardened, to save me from a lifelong paralysis of grief.

Is this jokey old Ben, or John Updike in his perennial, supremely eloquent youth? Elsewhere, by way of Ben, Updike lovingly describes a "halo of iridescence" in the sky:

> This new moon, visible at night as a faintly luminous lariat slowly moving across the paralyzed sprinkle of stars, by daytime is imprinted on oxygen's overarching blue like the trace of a cocktail glass, a sometimes silvery ring of pallor.

Meeting such similes running wild in the deserts of Arabia, to paraphrase Coleridge on some verse of Wordsworth's, we should instantly cry "Updike!" ♦

THE SKY LINE



THE MODERN MADE NEW

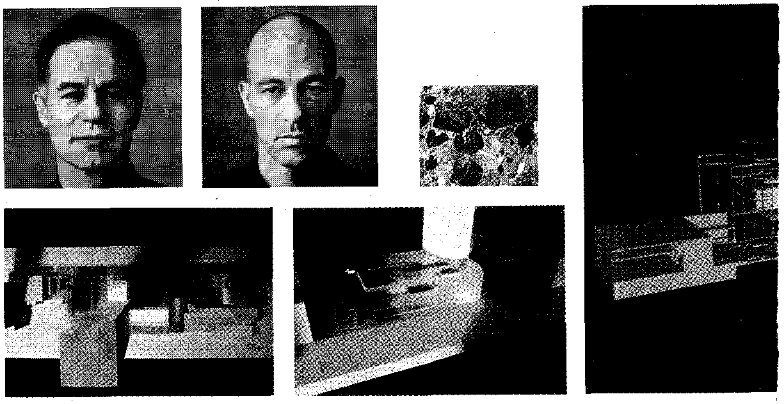
How MOMA's search for an architect turned into a search for its soul.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

WHEN the Museum of Modern Art's original building, on West Fifty-third Street, was completed, in 1939, its intentions couldn't have been clearer. Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone's International Style box broke through a line of staid brownstones like a chorus girl crashing through one of those paper hoops: it was crisp and sharp and fresh, and it symbolized youthful energy in a streetscape worn down with bourgeois fatigue. All that the museum sought to be as an institution was expressed in its architecture.

But what happens when the chorus girl grows old, and so prosperous that she now runs the whole block? She becomes a philosopher. The Modern, which has identity crises the way other museums stage exhibitions, embarked a little more than a year ago on a search for an architect to design the addition it hopes to build on the site of the Dorset Hotel, on West Fifty-fourth Street, behind the museum's present building. The project is arguably the most visible and prestigious architectural commission in the world right now, but it has attracted attention because of the way the Modern has gone about the search: instead of interviewing architects and choosing one, the museum has submitted itself to a form of institutional therapy, conducted in public. The museum has seemed as determined to reform the methods by which cultural institutions make new buildings as, say, the Democratic Party was to rethink the system of choosing Presidential candidates in 1968, and its efforts bear the same combination of idealistic determination to elevate a rough process and naïve conviction that it can be elevated which the Democrats' efforts bore when they shifted power from party bosses to the primary election system.

"This is about imagining ideas," Glenn Lowry, who has been the director of the museum since 1994, said to me last week. He was trying to explain why the museum was doing away with the smoke-filled-room approach. Instead, MOMA promised an "open" process, strictly meritocratic, with no predetermined favorites, and a willingness, even an eagerness, to see it culminate in the selection of someone whose name is not a household word, or even a well-known name in architectural circles. The Modern all but invented the notion that contemporary art should be displayed in a contemporary container, rather than in a building resembling a Greek temple. Now that every small, medium, and large museum around the world seems to have hired a celebrity architect to design its building—the art museum having become the secular church of our age, and the one kind of public building in which forceful architectural expression is not only tolerated but expected—the Modern has found itself facing a dilemma. Everyone else has bested it at its own game.

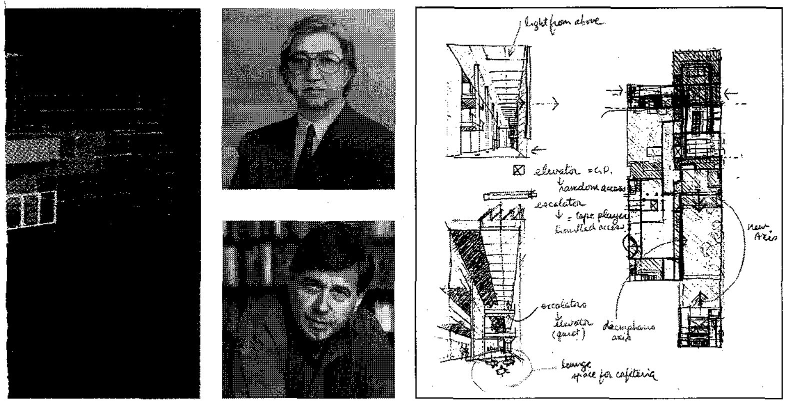


From top left: Jacques Herzog; Pierre de Meuron; and their submissions for the MOMA redesign.

Architecture, once the embodiment of the Modern's artistic mission, has become a reminder of its complacent middle age. The museum is already three times as big as it was when the Goodwin-and-Stone building opened, and additions by Philip Johnson and Cesar Pelli turned the original structure into the kernel of a superblock of corporate blandness. By 1984, when Pelli's addition—which included the fifty-five-story Museum Tower condominium—was finished, the museum had come to feel more conventional than the town houses that Goodwin and Stone's daring vision of 1939 replaced.

Of course, the same could be said of the modern art that has always been the cornerstone of the museum's collection. The Modern rose to power by displaying radical art that had become part of the establishment, and the evolution in the way its art has been perceived mirrors the institution's own history. In today's terms, possessing the world's most distinguished collection of paintings by Picasso, Braque, Matisse, and Mondrian is not very different from owning the Old Masters that fill the walls of the Frick. There has always been something of a split between those people at the museum who want to protect the Modern's hard-won position as the apex of the cultural establishment and those who feel a moral obligation to stay closer to the cutting edge. Everyone knows that the Modern could easily just settle into being a kind of Frick Collection of the twentieth century, presenting great and beloved works in a comforting, unchanging environment; it's not in the nature of the Modern, which, if nothing else, has made modernism stately, to live primarily at the edge, like the Dia Center for the Arts, or to market its name as a way of expanding aggressively around the world, like the Guggenheim. What has always seemed more likely is that it would just keep on growing, becoming ever bigger and more comprehensive—something like a Met without the Rembrandts.

In October of 1996, the museum invited several dozen artists, architects, and museum directors to a private conference at the Rockefeller estate at Pocantico Hills. Lowry saw the highly unusual brainstorming session as the first official step in the existential quest to figure out what the Modern would become. The invited architects, who included Peter Eisenman, Rem Koolhaas, Bernard Tschumi, and Arata Isozaki, were told to talk only about their philosophy of museums, and were informed that any attempt to solicit the job would not be welcome. None of them, however, could quite shake off the notion that they were being evaluated anyway, and Isozaki pitched himself fairly directly for the job.



Clockwise from top: Yoshio Taneguchi; his MOMA entry; Bernard Tschumi; and his design.

It did him no good. He wasn't invited to join in the next round, for which Lowry, Terry Riley—the chief curator of the museum's department of architecture and design—and a small group of trustees invited ten architects to try to imagine what the museum should be, without designing an actual building. With such an unfocussed assignment, it was not surprising that the results of that effort turned out to be quite opaque, even tortured. Most of the architects offered up a lot of talk about the Modern's aura, along with vague sketches, many of which looked rather more like real buildings than they were supposed to have, although not very attractive ones.

Nonetheless, all ten presentations were put on public view earlier this year, to underscore the museum's determination to have the process appear to be more in the nature of a public, free-form inquiry into the Modern's future than anything as prosaic as a search for an architect. Lowry, Riley, and the trustees saw enough promise in the musings of three of the architects—Bernard Tschumi, Yoshio Taneguchi, and the partnership of Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron—to ask those architects to turn their ideas into real designs. Their creations will be presented to the trustees next week, and afterward the board—unless it has a rash change of heart—will select one of them as the design for the new Museum of Modern Art.

Riley, a determined man, with the businesslike bearing of an accountant, has assumed considerable behind-the-scenes power as Lowry's chief adviser. He and Lowry accompanied a committee of trustees on a pair of trips on the private jet of Ronald Lauder, the museum's chairman, to visit new museums in the United States and Europe. It was Riley who successfully persuaded the board to put aside any hope of hiring a famous architect, as if that were a form of celebrity-hunting suitable to lesser institutions, like the Getty and the Guggenheim.

Probably the best-known name on the list of ten architects invited to participate in Phase II, the vague sketching stage, was Rem Koolhaas, the Dutch urbanist whose writings have made him a cult figure among younger architects. He was included largely because Philip Johnson, the architect who had been for years the museum's most powerful architectural politician, was known to favor him. But Koolhaas's buildings had left the trustees somewhat cool, and he had been perceived as arrogant at the Pocantico conference—an event that the trustees, however much they might have maintained that it wasn't a job interview, were quite prepared to consider one when it suited their purposes. Along with his sketches, Koolhaas had offered a three-hundred-and-fifty-page book that bitterly denounced the museum's earlier expansions. Like much of his writing, it was wildly rhetorical, and often brilliant. "Extension as extrapolation," "enlargement becomes Procrustean bed," "intimacy becomes overcrowding," and "wings that don't fly" were some of the phrases Koolhaas used as he argued in favor of the museum's starting all over again. But the trustees, already offended by Koolhaas's snide reference to the museum as "MOMA Inc.," omitted him from the list of finalists.

That the trustees would reject the competitor with the best chance of instantly reasserting the museum's status on the international buzz circuit seemed surprising at first. Koolhaas was the obvious, sexy choice; he presented himself as the least corporate candidate, and all but dared the museum to hire him. When the museum refused to take the dare, it was accused of timidity by some critics, but, the fact is, the Modern was merely acting with the new self-knowledge acquired during its long therapy. Choosing Koolhaas would have represented not courage but denial. The museum was emerging from its analysis to accept itself as it is: a place that has ridden the wave of modernism all the way from the avant-garde to the establishment. It knows that it is big and grown-up, and that big institutions shouldn't behave the way littler, younger ones do. While it fears being written off as conservative, the museum has come, in maturity, to realize that it cannot reject its now venerable roots.

This is the dilemma of modernism at the end of the twentieth century. Since what began as radical is now revered, how to continue it and still invigorate it with new life? All three architects on the museum's short list have tried to build on the early traditions of modernist architecture and send them in a new direction—Herzog & de Meuron through a kind of understated yet powerful sensual beauty, rich in texture; Tschumi through complex forms emerging from the Deconstructivist movement; and Taneguchi through a kind of serene elegance. There are no bad boys among them.

But can the Modern ever be bad? In truth, it never was: this is an institution that lives for the mainstream, and always has. While the results of its search for an architect will not be known until next week, one outcome is already clear: Lowry and Riley have skillfully used the idea of reform to keep the Modern safe from drastic change. ♦

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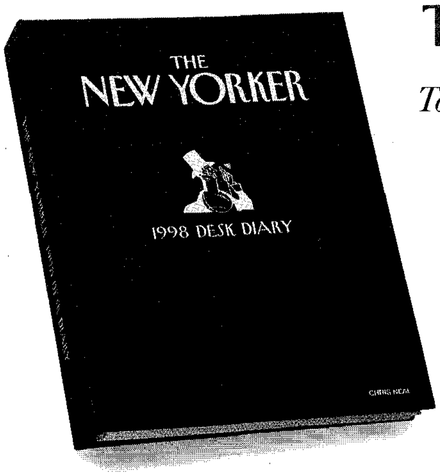
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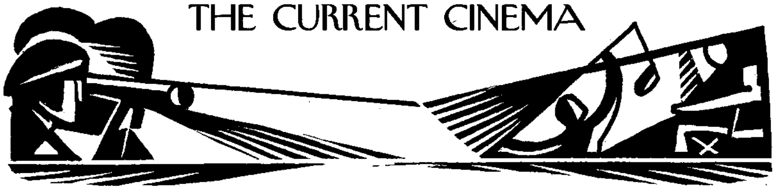
THE CURRENT CINEMA

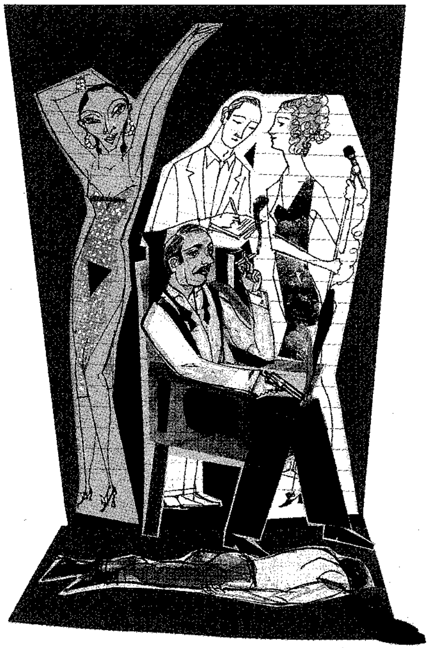


ROUND MIDNIGHT

Clint Eastwood's crisp turn through a murky garden.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

So sue me: I liked the movie better. I know that I'm depriving myself of our favorite moviegoing lament—especially when it comes to books, like "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," that have found an ardently responsive audience. The book was better, we shrug; the movie wasn't bad, but it didn't do the book justice. From the standpoint of cultural hierarchy, the book is *always* supposed to be better, except in those rare instances where literary and cinematic artifact sink to each other's level—where the pulpy essence of a novel like Jacqueline Susann's "Valley of the Dolls," say, is captured in a piece of fascinating, cliché-ridden camp. And there is no denying that John Berendt's account of bizarre and murderous doings in genteel Savannah not only has been a publishing sensation—it's been on the nonfiction best-seller list for more than three years and has hit No. 1 now that the publishers have gussied up the hardcover with a sleeve announcing the film—but is also the sort of book people wax passionate about. I can't think how many times "Midnight" has been recommended to me, by readers of all stripes. I should admit that I finally got around to reading it only after I saw the movie, which puts a different spin on the matter. Who's to say, that is, whether I wouldn't have appreciated, rather than grown irritated by, the narrator's way of seeming to know everything without being situated anywhere in particular if I hadn't first imbibed the story through the organizing framework of the movie, where the narrator has been reconceived so that he no longer floats vaguely above the unfolding events but is instead firmly hitched to them? Then, too, the unchecked anecdotal impulse in Berendt's book, which is what undoubtedly appealed to many readers, kept threatening to run away from me; it felt like a dinner-party conversation that goes on and on even after the guests, addled with too much food and gossip, have nodded off. But the movie version, based on a streamlined screenplay by John Lee Hancock, and directed with a kind of solid sequentiality by Clint Eastwood (on the face of it, a strange choice for this baroque and curvaceous narrative), beams a steadying light on the book's atmosphere of elegant, meandering hearsay.



The transvestite, the antiques dealer, and the whole jaded Savannah gang.

What the movie has going for it right off is Kevin Spacey. With each successive film, Spacey seems to cultivate a different corner of his many-angled persona, adding on a gesture or a look or merely a fresh way of saying nothing. Here Spacey plays Jim Williams, an antiques dealer and restorer of historic houses who shot and killed his much younger lover, a street hustler with violent tendencies, in 1981, in what may or may not have been an act of self-defense. For this role, Spacey

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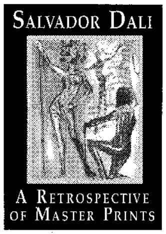
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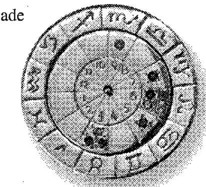

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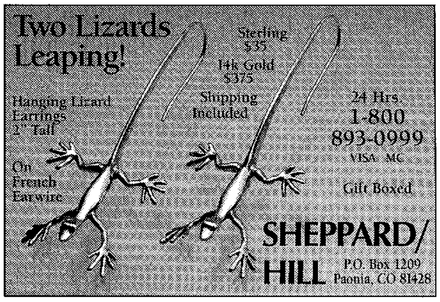

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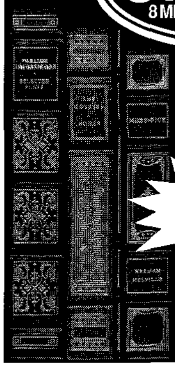

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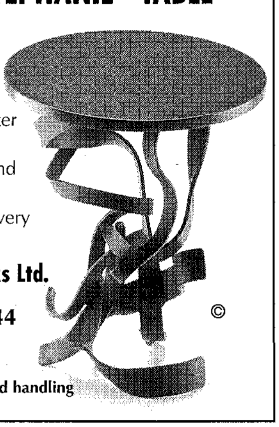

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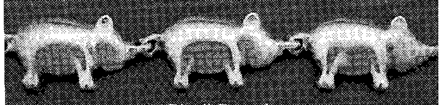

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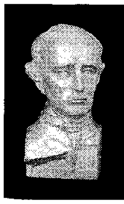

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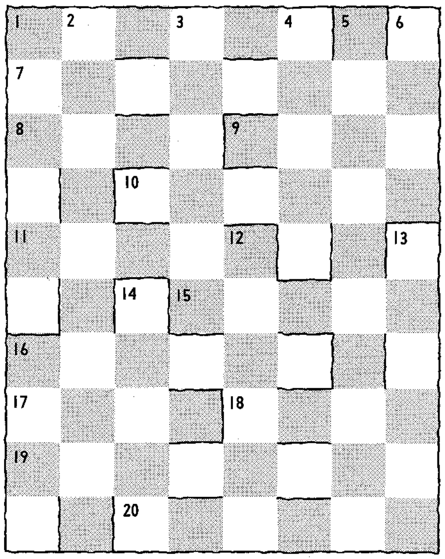
wears dark contact lenses, puffs on King Edward cigarillos, and speaks in one of those languid Southern drawls that can mislead you into taking him for more of an easygoing guy than he actually is. Spacey has always been good at suggesting bemused ambiguity, whether he's playing a serial killer or an amoral cop or a sought-after partygiver; there is an implied irony in the contained brio of his performances which is just this side of a put-on. He seems to be watching us at least as much as we watch him, and this slightly unsettling edge is particularly suited to the character of Williams, who is described in the first sentence of the book as having "eyes so black they were like the tinted windows of a sleek limousine—he could see out, but you couldn't see in." Indeed, the mystery of Williams's nature—whether he is a cold-blooded killer, or a man caught up in a twisted relationship that takes him beyond the conventions of polite society—is the mystery at the center of the story itself. What we understand from the minute we come upon him, in his landmark mansion, built by the songwriter Johnny Mercer's great-grandfather and filled with aristocratic tchotchkes, is that there is a tinge of menace beneath Williams's calm; when the rage and contempt lurking behind his almost preternatural self-possession erupt, we will not be entirely surprised that the same man who acts the gracious, house-proud host to Savannah's élite is capable of pulling the trigger on his German Luger pistol.

John Cusack plays John Kelso, a New York writer who has been assigned to produce five hundred words—"a literary postcard" is how he describes it—to cover Williams's annual Christmas bash for *Town & Country*, and stumbles, in the wake of the murder, upon the subject for a book. Kelso is the only completely invented character in the movie, and his down-to-earth, patently heterosexual presence is a crucial addition, providing some much-needed counterpoint to the ongoing shenanigans, as well as filling out the amorphous, ghostly outline of the book's narrator (about whom we are told little, including his sexual orientation). Cusack has cool, appraising eyes and a small rosy mouth that hangs open in a state of constant surprise; his Kelso keeps looking for answers, even when it becomes clear that the whole point of life within this sealed-off, Byzantine little universe he's stepped into is that there are none—or, if there are any, the citizens of Savannah would rather not know them, because they're sitting on secrets themselves. It is through Kelso's eyes that we meet these citizens: Sonny Seiler, Williams's bluff, pricey defense attorney (Jack Thompson); Minerva, the local voodoo priestess (Irma P. Hall); Mandy (Alison Eastwood, Clint's daughter), a pretty blonde who is wise to the ways of Savannah; and a black transvestite chanteuse who goes by the name of the Lady Chablis (played by the real Lady Chablis in the most riveting gender-bending performance since Jaye Davidson seduced Stephen Rea in "The Crying Game").

The second half of "Midnight" turns, a bit creakily, into a standard courtroom drama (Williams's four trials have been collapsed into one), wherein we get to watch the good people of the jury wrestle with—gasp!—rich, closeted homosexuals and their foolish romantic choices. How much you like this part of the movie depends on whether you're a fan of "Law & Order" (I'm not), but even here there's enough going on—the Lady Chablis takes the stand and practically eats up the screen, while Kevin Spacey shows how far modulated arrogance will take you—to keep the movie from sagging. In fact, the strength of the acting adds a welcome underpinning of steel to the hothouse climate of the book. Alison Eastwood, who looks like a less glacial Grace Kelly, has a warm, natural aura; she makes more of her role as the woman who lights up Kelso's wary heart than might have been expected. I did wish the camera were a little less frontal and a bit more mobile—it seemed to be stuck at the same angle for much of the movie—but Eastwood deserves credit for bringing a crisp touch to the hazy mists of Berendt's tale. Of course, one of the primary seductions of "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil" is that it reads like mild kink for ladies who lunch: you can dip in and out of its colorful, deliciously evil ambience without feeling the least bit threatened, or feeling the need to make any judgments. The movie does better by not letting us off quite so easily; it succeeds in implicating us in its own voyeuristic stance. You leave the theatre with the sense that you've been loitering in the garden after closing time, and the aftereffect is one of shadowy charm—more shadow, as it turns out, than charm. ◆

8X10 CRYPTIC

NO. 25 BY MONIKA ZOOK



ACROSS

1 Stint with chief of police after theatrical hanging (6)
7 Jerk interrupting jazz buff's rap (8)
8 Run into a Hindu hero (4)
9 Some constellations scatter? (4)
10 Total for a large oaf (3-3)
11 Have room for 1,000 in entrance of mine? (5)
15 Pull up to a bar at center of small country (5)
16 Naughty fellows hearing where congregations may be seated (6)
17 Start off breezy race (4)
18 Specific item in the début of "Top Hat" (4)
19 Promise, being careful about wild talk (8)
20 Cryptic teaser for an occasion in spring (6)

DOWN

1 Southern élite riot (6)
2 Taking no chances when consuming Shalala's wine (10)
3 C.I.A. lit out for a crooked character? (6)
4 Flower groups in the audience (5)
5 College graduates swallowed slander (10)
6 Almost express a bit of sports info (4)
12 Sat up after article with Greek letters (6)
13 One suffering right after 1955 Borgnine movie (6)
14 Doctor cared for inner circle (5)
16 Solution the two of us pronounced for a New Zealander (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 24 appears at right. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

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ACROSS

1 P(R)OP
4 AS + PS
9 A(G)NEW
10 TINGE (hidden)
11 IN + T + EGRAL (*large* rev.)
13 W + ELL
14 SEEK (*Sikh* hom.)
16 E(AT)S CROW
18 S + AUDI
19 I + OW + AN
20 E + DNA (*and* rev.)
21 TAN + G

DOWN

1 PATISSERIE (anag.)
2 RAIN (anag.)
3 P + AGES
5 S(NA)RE DRUM (*an* in *murders* rev.)
6 PEDALS (*peddles* hom.)
7 SW(ALLOW)ING
8 ON THE TOWN (anag.)
12 SE(A) GOD (*doges* rev.)
15 SCAN + T
17 O + DIN

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

READ THIS FIRST

BY BRUCE McCALL

CONGRATULATIONS, but WARNING: Driving your new car may cause car sickness. NOTE: While using this manual, make sure your reading area is well ventilated and free of Ebola viruses. To avoid eyestrain, use both eyes. CAUTION: Do not attempt to read the manual backward or underwater. If you are underwater, unlock all doors (A) and the glove box (B), using square-headed key (F).

Open doors may cause aerodynamic drag. To close door, swing door (A) toward the car body (B), using the handle (C), until the latch (D) engages. Do NOT attempt to force beyond this point. This could tip the car over on its side and interfere with a smooth, safe journey.

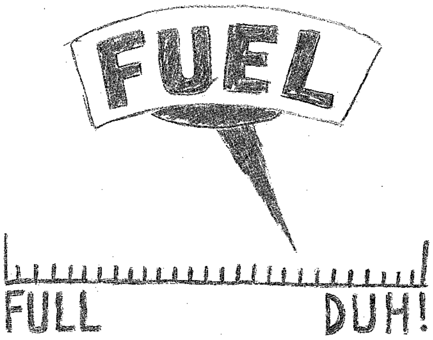
WARNING: You are a flammable substance. Always check before shifting out of P that you are not on fire. If your skin is blistering and you detect a barbecue-like aroma, you are on fire. A burning driver can cause serious damage to the car's upholstery. Repairs should be made only by an authorized dealer, using genuine original replacement parts. Failure to do so can void your warranty.

Your turn signal is a precision driving instrument. Do not attempt to use the left or right signal's one-two beat as a metronome during in-car singalongs. This can induce hypnotic trances and loss of control, with possible damage to the car's paint finish. WARNING: Locust plagues cause only superficial paint damage. Never attempt to erase blemishes with a rattail file. Use only recommended locust plague removers. See your authorized dealer's wide selection.

If you hear a steady humming noise during driving, do NOT attempt to dismantle your car while it is running. This can lead to loss of windshield-washer fluid. Check your radio or other occupants for humming sounds. If humming noise persists, drive until the fuel gauge reads "Empty," at which point humming should stop. WARNING: When refilling fuel tank, uncap slowly, as shown in diagrams 1-2-3-4-5-6, on a well-ventilated prairie. Never uncap fuel filler port in close proximity to a Chinese New Year celebration.

WARNING: The driver's sun visor (A) can create visual "blind spots" that cause fatal head-on collisions. If you are about to have a fatal head-on collision, leave current registration and insurance documents in the glove box (B). SAFETY NOTE: Never leave valuables in an unlocked glove box. The same key (C) that unlocks your trunk (D) unlocks your glove box and the right-rear passenger door. The Valet Key (E) unlocks the driver's-side door only when ALL other doors, the fuel filler port, and the trunk are locked. The ignition key (F) also unlocks all doors, the fuel filler port (G), and the trunk (H). Never give the ignition key to a stranger (I). If all keys are used simultaneously, the Gard-a-Larm (J) will sound until the Valet Key is inserted in the trunk lock (K) and turned counterclockwise, as in diagrams 9-10. Turn clockwise to rearm.

WARNING: Your car's "package" or "hat" shelf (A) is not a shelf. Packages and hats should NEVER be placed there. For package-shelf instructions, consult the Package Shelf or Emergency sections of this manual or make an appointment with the service manager at your authorized dealer.



WARNING: Attempting to drive your car with a pedestrian underneath can cause uneven tire wear, front-end misalignment, binding of the steering gear, and damage to the catalytic converter in your exhaust system, creating an environmental threat that may increase the danger of global warming. Never leave your car's engine running in the Amazon rain forest. MAINTENANCE TIP: If Amazon damages seat upholstery, wipe clean with a sponge or cloth soaked in tepid water. WARNING: Use only genuine, factory-direct tepid water. See your authorized dealer.

While your car has been carefully engineered for years of enjoyable motoring, high-speed driving maneuvers during a heart attack, stroke, or machine-gun fusillade should be attempted only by trained professionals on a specially prepared closed course. If you are about to be incapacitated by events beyond your control, keep both hands on the wheel, turn the radio, tape deck, or CD player to OFF, deactivate Cruise Control, reduce speed, activate your turn signal, drive onto a level area away from traffic, bring your car to a gradual stop, stow all beverages and return cup holders to the stored position, put the parking brake in the ON position, shift to P, turn the ignition to OFF, unlock all doors, switch your emergency flasher to ON, and consult the Emergency section of this manual. IMPORTANT: Do NOT unbuckle your seat belt. It is the most critical element of your car's Supplemental Restraint System and has been shown to save lives in certain instances. Remember: Give your loved ones a good belt! ♦

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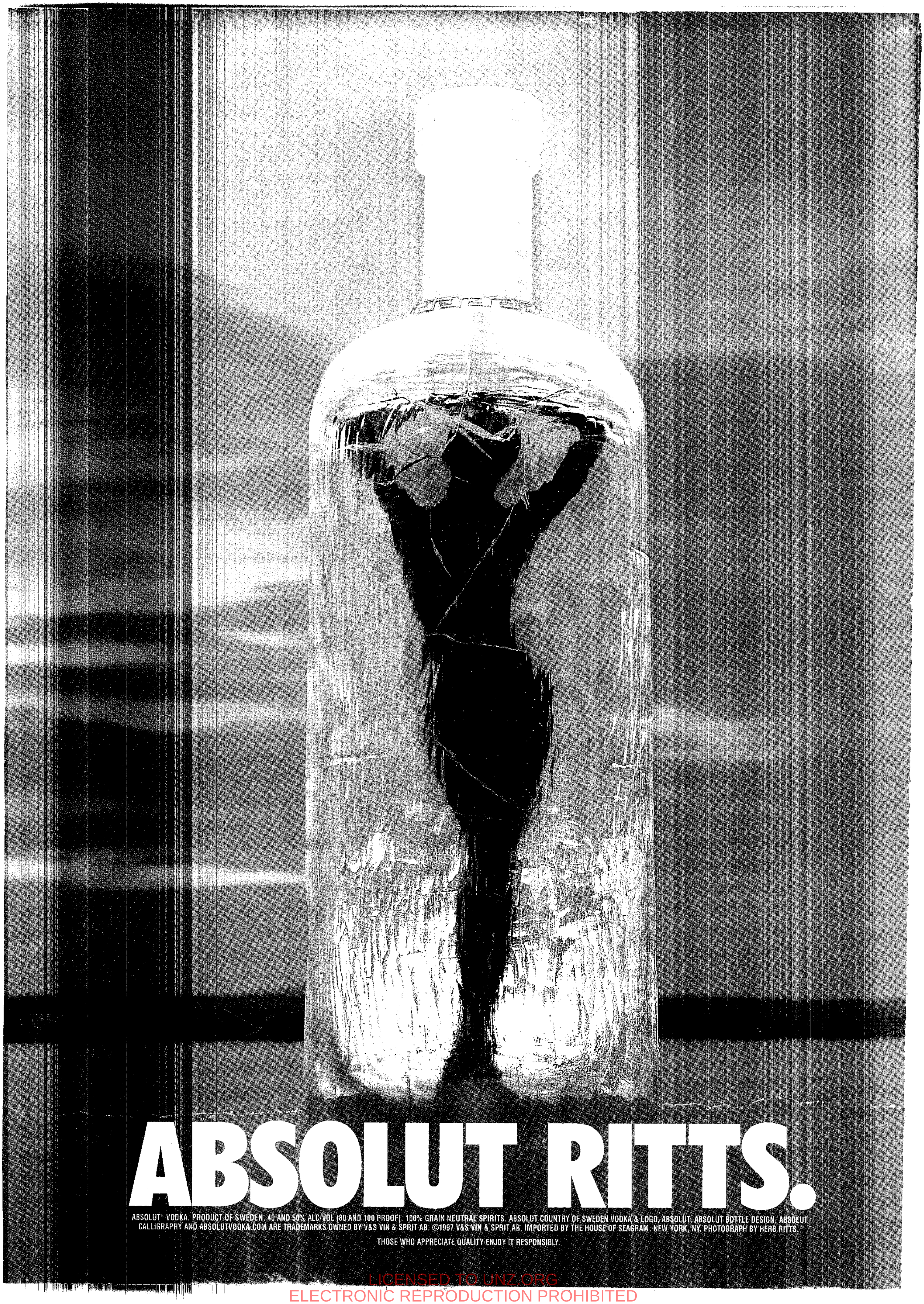

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